The Influence of the Greek Fathers' Doctrine of Theosis on John Wesley's Doctrine of Perfection

by

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Abstract

Since the time of John Wesley, periodic questions about the patristic influences and sources of his work have been raised. This is particularly the case with Wesley's doctrine of perfection. Addressing these questions will assist researchers in determining to what extent Wesley's influences and sources emerged from the Eastern Church Fathers who lived prior to the fifth century. To accomplish such, this dissertation will also attempt to determine if an Eastern influence was primary in its influence or was it mediated in a secondary fashion through the patristic renaissance in the Church of England, beginning in the sixteenth century. The major challenge of the research is Wesley's own declared intention of not sourcing much of his own writing.

The chosen method of research for this dissertation is the Comparative Methodology, which entails analyzing comparatively, in as much detail as possible, selected works of Wesley, several Anglican Divines, along with a defined number of Eastern Church Fathers. Although the results of this research clearly demonstrate an Eastern influence on Wesley, it also suggests that the potential for influence from the Anglican Divines of Wesley's era cannot be completely eliminated. Within the Eastern influence, the results point to a more diversified influence, that is, influence emerging from a greater number of Eastern Fathers than has perhaps been measured to this juncture. These results will provide future researchers with a
broader foundation from which to examine even in greater detail the sources detailed in this work.
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Chapter 1

I. Introduction and Purpose

Since John Wesley's time, periodic questions about patristic influences on his life and theology have been raised. Common to these questions has been an attempt to demonstrate how early Christian doctrines and church practices were passed down through tradition to Wesley, and as a result influenced his theology and methodology.¹ Further to this attempt is a growing opinion that Wesley’s mature theology bears a “surprisingly close resemblance to many aspects of the Eastern Orthodox tradition.”²

The question this thesis will investigate is “To what extent did the doctrine of theosis of the Eastern Church Fathers influence John Wesley’s doctrine of perfection?” The declared purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate that given his studies of patristics, John Wesley drew upon the thought of the Eastern Church fathers in formulating his doctrine of sanctification and Christian perfection. Originally I had planned to also include broadly in this study the pneumatology of John Wesley. However, as my research deepened, it became apparent that Wesley's doctrine of perfection is truly Trinitarian in its base. To attempt to extricate Wesley's pneumatology from this base would have been to truncate his theology severely. Therefore, although pneumatological observations are made in this thesis, the true focus is Wesley's doctrine of theosis.

¹ “It is … useful to survey the largely unexplored range of his sources, tools, and theological culture….(Wesley’s) reading in the history of Christian thought ranges over the centuries, East and West—with many figures and volumes so obscure that one wonders where he found them all. His own recorded bibliography runs to more than fourteen hundred different authors, with nearly three thousand separate items from them. In the Sermons alone, we have listed more than twenty-five hundred quotations and allusions worth checking…” Albert C. Outler, “John Wesley: Folk Theologian,” Theology Today, 34, no 2, July 1977, 150, 152 [150-160].
Recent scholarship has joined a small but growing cadre of those who discern a link between the thought of Wesley and the Eastern Fathers. This recent interest was encouraged in 1964 when Albert Outler noted this connection. He suggested that Wesley's doctrine of sanctification might have roots in the work of Gregory of Nyssa and the Cappadocians by way of the so-called "Macarian" homilies. Although Outler reserves the bulk of his suggestion regarding such linkage to two footnotes, he does offer a specific example that is germane to this paper.

What fascinated him in these men was their description of "perfection" (τελειωσις) as the goal (σκοπος) of the Christian in this life. Their concept of perfection as a process rather than a state gave Wesley a spiritual vision quite different from the static perfectionism envisaged in Roman spiritual theology of the period and the equally static quietism of those Protestants and Catholics whom he deplored as "the mystic writers"…Thus it was that the ancient and Eastern tradition of holiness as disciplined love became fused in Wesley's mind with his own Anglican tradition of holiness as aspiring love, and thereafter was developed in what he regarded to the end as his own most distinctive doctrinal contribution.

Recent renewed interest concerning the influence of Eastern Patristics on Wesley's practice and theology has to some degree followed Outler's lead by suggesting that much of the influence "can be traced theologically through attention to Eastern Patristic understandings of the Holy Spirit's presence and work as Western appropriations of Eastern Patristic pneumatological

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6 Ibid, 9-10.
insights, especially concerning the…Spirit's role in ‘empowering’ the Christ life of discipleship, leading to ‘perfection in love.’”

John Wesley’s love for the church fathers began early in his life and never abated.

According to Michael J. Christensen, “Wesley learned from his father to appreciate the ancient pastoral theologians: Chrysostom, Basil, Athanasius and Cyprian. At Oxford Wesley participated in the Patristic renaissance and idealized the Apostolic Age which he regarded as a time of authentic Christianity.”

One strand of his Anglican context with which Wesley resonated was the renewed appreciation of early Christian theology and practice. Anglican theologians of Wesley's era "called for a recovery of the faith and practice of the first four centuries of the Christian church… In the process…they reintroduced an awareness of many early theologians—particularly Greek writers—who had been lost from Western Christian consciousness." "Wesley readily adopted this esteem for ‘primitive’ (i.e., pristine!) Christian theology and practice. Moreover, this was hardly a casual attitude of respect. He devoted considerable attention to the scholarship that was being produced by the Anglican patristics renaissance.”

Rediscoveries of ancient texts during the late medieval and Renaissance era, coupled with the invention of the printing press, led to a quantitative and qualitative increase in scholarship of all kinds. New editions of primitive church

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10 Randy L. Maddox, "Reading Wesley as a Theologian," *WTJ*, 30, 1, Spring 1995, 14 [7-54]. “…there was in the High Church Anglicanism of Wesley’s day an extension of the definition of “primitive Christianity” to include the church of antiquity up through the fourth century. (this usage) represent(s) an appeal to primitive Christianity as a perceived “golden age” of the church, an early time when the church was free from the human accretions which distorted in various ways its doctrine and practice. For Wesley primitive Christianity typically includes the NT era through the third century…” Kelly D. Carter, “the High Church Roots of John Wesley’s Appeal to Primitive Christianity, *Restoration Quarterly*, 37, 2, 1995, 65 [65-79].
writings became widely available in their original Latin and Greek versions. Though there was interest in patristic scholarship on the Continent, study of the fathers thrived in England. Thomas Cranmer, John Jewel (1522-71), John Whitgift (1530-1604) and Richard Hooker (1554-1600) all made extensive use of a broad range of patristic texts.  

As a result, Wesley not only became aware of many of the Greek patristic authors "he imbibed a marked preference for them over the Latin writers." Wesley had been reading from the Anglican divines while at Oxford. He knew well the work of Richard Hooker, Henry Hammond, Joseph Mede, George Bull, John Pearson, William Beveridge and John Tillotson.  

The latter part of the seventeenth-century witnessed a vigorous renaissance of patristic studies….William Beveridge (1637-1708), Bishop of St. Asaph, was one of the most scholarly and influential of these "restorers of primitive piety." Wesley had read Beveridge’s *Sermons* and *Codex* at Oxford…

During his mission to Georgia in 1735 Wesley took with him a remarkable theological library. According to Outler, “it numbered slightly more than sixty titles, the bulk of them by Anglican authors of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, a few by Nonconformists, and still fewer by Continental Protestants. The most impressive single item in the library was the massive two-

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12 Maddox, *Reading Wesley*, 15. John Wesley was raised in a home where, at the very least his mother was sympathetic to the Nonjurors and High Churchmen. According to Henry Rack, these clergy stressed "in varying degrees…a special reverence for the teaching and practice of the 'primitive' church of the first five centuries." See Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992, 26. Further, according to Rack, "High Church views…were strongly marked in the early career of John Wesley as they were in his father and brothers…. Wesley's original pursuit of 'primitive Christianity' was very much in the High Church and indeed Nonjuror mode." (Ibid). Indeed, the Nonjurors "formed in effect a separate Anglican church that continued into the nineteenth century. They ultimately were led to engage in correspondence with the Eastern Orthodox churches in the hope of establishing communion with them… In 1763, John Wesley, failing to find any Anglican bishop willing to ordain Methodist preachers, won the agreement of the exiled Greek bishop of Arcadia…to do so." See David J. Melling, "British Isles," *The Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity*, (Eds.) Ken Parry, David J. Melling, Dimitri Brady, Sidney H. Griffith and John F. Healey, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2001), 89; "While at Oxford, (Wesley) came under the influence of a peculiar group of Nonjurors who stressed the authority of the so-called *Apostolic Canons* and *Constitutions*, and pressed an unusual program of liturgical and disciplinary reform based on these." (Campbell, "Christian Tradition," 60).  
volume folio of William Beveridge’s *Pandectae*, a vast array of ancient Eastern liturgical
texts.”

In his *Address to the Clergy* in 1756, Wesley is effusive in his recommendation of the Fathers.

Can any who spend several years in those seats of learning, be excused, if they do not add to that of the languages and sciences the knowledge of the Fathers? the most authentic commentators on Scripture, as being both nearest the fountain and eminently endowed with that Spirit by whom all Scripture was given. It will be easily perceived, I speak chiefly of those who wrote before the Council of Nice. But who would not likewise desire to have some acquaintance with those that followed them? With St. Chrysostom, Basil, Jerome, Austin and, above all, the man of a broken heart, Ephraem Syrus?

Such praise by Wesley prompts Maddox to suggest that although "it is generally recognized that the first four centuries of Christian tradition played a significant role in Wesley's theology, (w)hat is not as often noted is that he tended to value the Greek representatives over the Latin.”

Wesley drew from the well of Eastern spirituality in his readings of the Eastern fathers' spiritual texts; in fact, he preferred the Eastern teachers over the Westerners. These included Athanasius, Basil, John Chrysostom, Clement of Alexandria, Clement of Rome, Dionysius the Areopagite, Gregory of Nazianzus, Ephraem Syrus, Origen, and others. There is no doubt that Wesley owes to the early Greek fathers the development of both his own anthropological understanding and the ensuing experientially oriented doctrine of entire sanctification often called perfection.

Meyendorff, while underlining the fact that the entire tradition of the Christian East has attributed to the saints and spiritual leaders of history "a certain particular authority in

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15 Ibid, 12. While in Georgia, Wesley notes in his journal entry for September 13, 1736, “I began reading with Mr. Delamotte, Bishop Beveridge’s *Pandectae Canonum Conciliorum*.” See John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd Edition (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991, 1), 41. This reference will be noted as *Works*. Regardless of which source is cited of Wesley's *Works*, I have endeavoured to consult both, so as to be as accurate as possible.

16 Wesley, *Works*, X, 484. See also, 492.

17 Maddox, "John Wesley and Eastern Orthodoxy," 30. In the same article, Maddox is even stronger when he writes, "Even a cursory reading of Wesley shows that (the) recovered Greek theological voices were important to him" (Ibid.).

18 Kärkkäinen, 74.
preserving the truth and guiding the Christian community,\textsuperscript{19} concludes that this very aspect of the Eastern tradition attracted "the attention and admiration of John Wesley, who even translated the writings attributed to Macarius of Egypt into English."\textsuperscript{20}

The importance of this influence of Macarius on Wesley (and other writings from the Early church, especially the Eastern fathers) seems more significant than is often recognized…. Wesley found in these writings a clear call to real, pure holiness of Christian living, attainable in this life through active cooperation with God's grace, and available to all.\textsuperscript{21}

II. Literature Review

According to Heitzenrater, "Over three hundred studies of Wesley have been written, many of them more confusing than helpful in the process of trying to recapture a historically accurate basis upon which to build a fully accurate picture of the man."\textsuperscript{22} As already noted, some scholars have recognized that John Wesley not only revered the early fathers of the church, he also learned from and was influenced by them. Martin Schmidt, in his three volume theological biography of Wesley, concludes, "The key to John Wesley's spiritual development is to be found in (his) living involvement in primitive Christianity."\textsuperscript{23} What has not been sufficiently explored is the precise use Wesley made of these sources. "While it has long been maintained that there is a strong influence of the early church fathers reflected in the theology of the Wesleys, the channels of the influence have not been extensively explored."\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{21} David C. Ford, "Saint Makarios of Egypt and John Wesley: Variations on the Theme of Sanctification," \textit{Greek Orthodox Theological Review}, 33, 3, 1988, 286-7 [285-312].
\textsuperscript{22} Richard P. Heitzenrater, \textit{The Elusive Mr. Wesley}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} Edition, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 16.
Nevertheless, Wesleyan scholars have certainly recorded their opinions on the subject. Heitzenrater concludes after his investigation of Patristic influences on Wesley, that although one cannot dismiss the influence of the early church in Wesley's thought and life, nevertheless one is left "wondering about the level of his reliance upon and knowledge of the primary sources, especially of the Eastern Church."²⁵ Peter Bouteneff, in an essay exploring linkages between Gregory of Nyssa and the Wesleys is also cautious.

Comparison between the Wesleys and the Greek Fathers is a highly attractive pursuit… Yet it would be a mistake to treat the Wesleys and the Fathers simply side by side. The Wesleys are not, nor do they pretend to be, systematic theologians. And while they were surely influenced by the Fathers, it is no longer possible to press the idea of direct influence too far.²⁶

Some researchers seem strangely bifurcated on the subject. Bouteneff, having asserted the impossibility of pressing direct influence, nevertheless proceeds in the same chapter to attempt to do the impossible by drawing a direct link between Wesley's perfection and holiness and Gregory of Nyssa's concept of salvation.²⁷ Additionally, John Kent, with little or no explanation, boldly warns that Outler's suggestion that Wesley's doctrine of perfection emerged through the lens of Gregory of Nyssa/Macarius "should be treated with great caution."²⁸ Kent exhibits some inconsistency, however, in that in the same paragraph in which he condemns the Outler thesis he acknowledges that Wesley desired that Christians "achieve a perfection as complete as that possible for the Desert Father…"²⁹ Such an appeal to the Desert Fathers brings

²⁵ Richard P. Heitzenrater, "John Wesley's Reading of and References to the Early Church Fathers," (Ed.), S.T. Kimbrough, Orthodox and Wesleyan Spirituality, 31. These cursory observations regarding alternate points of reference in terms of the influence of the Eastern Fathers on Wesley will be considered in more detail later in this thesis.
²⁷ Ibid, 190.
²⁹ Ibid, 474.
Wesley into the influence of the East, albeit not directly under the tutelage of Gregory of Nyssa. Finally, Kenneth Collins' excessively icy rhetoric in discrediting any reading of Wesley in light of Eastern Orthodoxy, essentially melts away when one allows his point that Eastern Orthodoxy was a later historical development than the Eastern Fathers proper. Collins insists, "for the sake of accuracy, a distinction must be made between the tradition of Eastern Orthodoxy and the early Eastern Fathers."\(^{30}\)

If Albert Outler can be positioned as the baseline in terms of Wesleyan studies that explore the influences of the Eastern Fathers on John Wesley's theology, the landscape of even general studies devoted to the Wesleys did not begin to demonstrate significant research until the early eighties. From this date to the year 2008 some 136 dissertations have been produced in the field of Wesley studies.\(^{31}\) One of the first dissertations of the eighties directly connected to the study of Wesley and Patristic sources was Keefer's *John Wesley: Disciple of Early Christianity*.\(^{32}\) According to Keefer, a study of Wesley's life indicates his commitment to reviving the Christianity which he believed characterized the early Christian era, particularly the pre-Constantine centuries. Although a mammoth work of some 742 pages, it is not until the last 150 pages that the author writes directly regarding the sources of Wesley's primitivism. Even then his analysis is wide-ranging rather than in-depth. Keefer seems content to broadly trace sources of influence for Wesley, beginning with his home, parents, education, the Church

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\(^{30}\) Kenneth C. Collins, "John Wesley's Critical Appropriation of Tradition in his Practical Theology," *WTJ*, 35, no. 2, Fall 2000, 70, 80-81 [69-90]; see also Kenneth J. Collins, *John Wesley*, 195-6. With this distinction in place, Collins goes on to add, almost reluctantly, "it can be affirmed that Wesley did indeed appeal to the writings of the Eastern Fathers such as Clement of Alexandria and Ephrem Syrus in his explication of Christian perfection." Ibid, 196.


of England, the Puritans, Pietists, Anabaptists and Mystics. Although each source in some measure directed Wesley backward toward the primitive church, Keefer's analysis is focused on the contemporary influences on Wesley's primitivism rather than the ancient primary sources themselves.

Kelley McCormick's thesis, "John Wesley's Use of John Chrysostom on the Christian Life: Faith Filled with the Energy of Love," was written in 1984 at Drew University.33

Campbell aptly summarizes his contribution:

In this and subsequent articles, McCormick has argued for an understanding of sanctification that takes seriously the Christian's progressive growth in holiness…. McCormick found new depths of spiritual richness in the ancient Eastern conception of the Christian's growth into godliness.34

McCormick ultimately became convinced that the ancient Christian traditions of theosis lay behind Wesley's understanding of Christian holiness. McCormick suggests that Luther's emphasis on sola gratia and sola fide as the explanation of how one becomes a Christian neglected the doctrine of sanctification or holy living as a Christian, and that Wesley was uncomfortable with this. Additionally, the antidote of "prescriptive" religion (works, holy living) to this apparent antinomianism was so emphasized that very little was said of grace and faith. For McCormick, Wesley saw in Chrysostom a synergistic formula that allowed faith and works to cooperate together.

33 Kelley Steve McCormick, John Wesley's Use of John Chrysostom on the Christian Life: Faith Filled with the Energy of Love, Drew University Ph.D. thesis, 1984. McCormick argues that the theological antecedents for Wesley—namely Luther—accented sola gratia and sola fide almost to the point of neglecting the aspect of holiness within a Christian's life. Although accused of swinging the pendulum to antinomianism, Wesley, according to McCormick, actually sharpened a synergistic order of salvation: "faith filled with the energy of love," and did so by championing John Chrysostom as a primary leader in the balance between faith and work. McCormick, Ibid, 351-355. McCormick’s emphasis is not so much a critique against Luther as it is a presentation of Wesley’s cooperating ordo salutis. McCormick’s discourse regarding Luther is early in his work and prior to his linking Chrysostom directly and indirectly to Wesley, which included Wesley’s appropriation of the idea of theosis from Chrysostom.

McCormick's thesis does in fact offer an excellent resource in terms of linking Wesley to Chrysostom. Early in this work he offers a brief survey of Wesley's Patristic readings from 1720-1738 and identifies, through Wesley's own references, some direct ties to the work of Chrysostom. In the final chapter of his work, McCormick provides a detailed explanation of Wesley's appropriation of John Chrysostom. This chapter, in part, became the source for McCormick's subsequent article on the same subject in the *Wesleyan Theological Journal*.

Ted Campbell completed his Ph.D. thesis at Southern Methodist University in 1984.35 This work focuses on Wesley's vision of ancient Christianity as a renewal for Christianity in his day. Campbell had originally set out in a different direction.

...Although I had begun with an interest in demonstrating similarities between Wesley's view of sanctification and that of ancient Eastern Christian asceticism..., I had become convinced of the methodological difficulty of demonstrating such a connection. Certainly the use of ancient Eastern sources existed, but because there were so many other sources for Wesley's doctrine of sanctification, it would be impossible, I argued, to say that the ancient sources were somehow "primary."36

As a student of Outler, Campbell felt that his research may have disappointed Outler in some ways: "he had hoped, in particular, that it would confirm his suspicion that Wesley's doctrine of sanctification was in essence that of ancient Eastern Christian asceticism, which came to Wesley from Gregory of Nyssa by way of the so-called "Macarian" homilies."37

Although Campbell does not affirm this correlation, it remains the purpose of my own thesis to demonstrate correlation, also keeping in mind and demonstrating to some degree the other sources which may have impacted Wesley’s theology. Campbell does argue that there

36 Ibid, 10.
37 Campbell, *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity*, x.
were three distinct ways in which Christian antiquity was appropriated into Anglicanism and that Wesley combined all three. In this combination, Wesley could remain a loyal churchman, a reformer of the status quo and polemicist against the Roman Church. In spite of his argument for a rather sophisticated use of patristic sources, Campbell remained somewhat skeptical that Wesley was influenced by the substance and content of what he read in the church fathers. Nevertheless, Campbell's work provides an essential first stop in the analysis of Wesley's use of early Christian sources, and in spite of the observation that he did not "focus on the Greek Fathers," his is the most reliable analysis of Wesley's use of the Eastern writers available. Campbell provides the basis from which future work on Wesley's appropriation of models from the early church must begin. Arthur Christian Meyers' 1985 work on Wesley and the Church Fathers has provoked a variety of responses, but does not offer any helpful scholarship on the subject.

In the early nineties, Hoo-Jung Lee completed his Ph.D. thesis under the title "The Doctrine of new Creation in the Theology of John Wesley." Lee advances two main claims: that Wesley's theology is better read in terms of the organizing scheme of re-creation than that of the ordo salutis and that Macarius and the Syriac tradition were more influential on Wesley than was Gregory of Nyssa. This latter emphasis appears in chapter 5 of his work. In

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38 See Campbell, John Wesley and Christian Antiquity, 20-2; 52-3. Campbell attributes to Wesley a combination of conservative, programmatic, and polemical uses of Christian antiquity.

40 Bondi declares that Meyers' work "may go down in history as one of the worst of doctoral dissertations. His efforts…devolved into long citations from patristic handbooks and unreflective assembling of quotations from JohnWesley." Campbell is kinder and more tactful when by reserving his comments to a footnote: "Meyers' dissertation tends to give lengthy excerpts of ancient Christian texts or secondary literature about the ancient writers without drawing particular conclusions about their influence." Meyers was certainly interested in the subject of ancient influences on Wesley and he argued that Wesley's exposure to Eastern patristic literature changed his theological perspective. However, Meyers does not offer conclusions as to which of the influences are primary, but is content to overwhelm the reader with the scope of Wesley's familiarity with ancient Christian traditions.

particular, Lee argues that Syriac Christianity, especially as seen in Macarius, was more amenable to Wesley because it contained a deeper recognition of the problem of original sin than did the Greek-speaking theologians. He is convinced that Macarius deserves recognition as the major source for what is distinctive in Wesley's understanding of perfection, sanctification, and the spiritual senses. This point of reference stands against Outler's opinion that Nyssa is the prime influence on Wesley's concept of perfection and is in contrast to the assessment by Sebastian Brock regarding the proximity of Syriac and Greek theologians.  

Seung-An Im's 1994 work examines Wesley's use of Augustine and Gregory of Nyssa in terms of his anthropology. Im contends that the relationship of Latin and Greek influences in Wesley's thought should be seen more as a both/and relationship, rather than in the either/or terms that he maintains characterizes earlier studies. His point may be well taken in terms of Wesley's anthropology, insomuch as Wesley aligns himself both with the West in terms of the doctrine of original sin and the East in terms of the image/likeness of God in humanity. According to Im, it is insufficient to declare Wesley's theology synthetic or eclectic in terms of Christian anthropology. Rather, it is more appropriate to refer to his theology as comprehensive, in the sense that it treats sources both of the Western and Eastern traditions inclusively in a dialectic tension without losing the essential elements of either tradition. Im's work is helpful in terms of Wesley studies, even if the focus is anthropology, given that Wesley's anthropology is intrinsically tied to his pneumatology, specifically in terms of his doctrine of perfection.


In 1999 Neil Anderson directed his research toward the influence of Clement of Alexandria on the thought of Wesley. Anderson builds his argument patiently and with diligence from primary sources—both patristic and early Church of England sources—in dialogue with contemporary scholarship. The explicit argument is a tightly knit correlation of the major factors affecting the extent of Wesley's dependence on Clement and also the differences between them. Anderson insists that Clement's portrait of Christian character is, to a large extent, the model for Wesley's writing on the “Character of a Methodist” and other texts on Christian perfection. Although Anderson is cautious not to overstate his case, in my reading of his work I would conclude that he sets forth evidence that could actually argue both for and against the claim of influence and convergence, depending on the lens of the historical interpreter. Nonetheless, in terms of future study involving Wesley and Clement of Alexandria certainly Anderson's work must be considered seriously.

In my review of the literature related to the subject of this thesis there were no further dissertations that directly impacted my research. Outler observes “that the task of source-tracings in the Wesley corpus is still closer to its bare beginnings than one might wish, and it is both a formidable and frustrating business. The data are insufficient, the clues too meagre, the methods thus far developed too haphazard.”

My conclusion is that although there has been scattered but excellent research into particular converging influences in terms of Wesley's patristic sources, these studies have tended to focus on a single person of influence. Diligent and far-reaching research needs to

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44 Wesley, *Works (BCE)*, 68.
occur that broadens the scope of interconnections so that one might see a full-orbed picture of Wesley's patristic interfaces. Certainly, one researcher or one thesis will not be able to approach and synthesize each individual patristic source that impacted Wesley's theology of perfection, but it does appear that this remains an area of need in terms of Wesley studies.

III. Thesis Statement

In summary, I will follow and test the lead of Albert Outler in recognizing that key elements of Wesley's theology "were adapted from many sources: …the ethical notions of divine-human synergism from the ancient Fathers of the Church; …the vision and program of perfection (τελειωσις) from Gregory of Nyssa via 'Macarius.'"\(^{45}\) Despite the excellent work already done by scholars in following up Outler’s claim, a clear analysis of and definitive judgment regarding the relevant texts has not yet been achieved. That Wesley took Christian Antiquity as a decisive guideline in theology and living can be seen throughout the corpus of his work, and although it is recognized that "it is possible for two people to analyze the same observation data and come to very different, indeed diametrically opposed, conclusions,"\(^ {46}\) I am intent on demonstrating only one conclusion: that Wesley was in fact clearly influenced by the fathers in the formation of his doctrine of sanctification and perfection. I am approaching this dissertation with the conviction that Wesley’s interest in Christian Antiquity was a primary and recurring theme throughout his life, subject to development, alteration, and review, but never abandoned. He was certainly indebted to several sources for his interest in the early

\(^{45}\) Outler, John Wesley, 119.
fathers, but demonstrated an unusual ability to adapt sources for his own purposes in ways that indicate that he had independent convictions regarding the early church and her theology.

IV. Methodology, Sources and Research Questions

History is always concerned with the particular, the individual. Its task is not explanation of general relationships but understanding the uniqueness of a situation, an individual or the relationships among individuals. Leopold von Ranke’s passion for historical objectivity and accuracy rejects speculation in terms of understanding history. It begins and ends with a strict dedication to the facts.⁴⁷ Ranke’s directional compass still points to a reasonable target. However, regardless of the determination to ascertain only the facts, and despite the method of research that is chosen, one must bear in mind, if Outler is to be believed, that “historical truth is stranger than fiction and more difficult to make sense of.”⁴⁸ Further, “it seems that even the best intentions, and even the best historical method do not always succeed and yield certainty.”⁴⁹

All historical interpretation proceeds under the strictures of a methodological principle of radical uncertainty, which has not always been sufficiently acknowledged. Historical judgments may be truly valid and highly meaningful, but they are also, by their very nature, apophatic and dialectic—open to further and even contrary formation…. In history,…the principle of uncertainty is radical and pervasive, built into the process of historical inquiry itself.⁵⁰

Henry Bowden argues that church historians, although they approach their research with some idea of what they expect to do with a topic, nevertheless discover that “it is often difficult to

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ascertain the subtler aspects of purpose because at the outset historians frequently do not realize what they intend to accomplish.”

Notwithstanding these caveats, the chosen method of research for this thesis is the Comparative Methodology. As a piece of historical research, this thesis will involve a close reading and comparison of Wesley's writing on sanctification and perfection chronologically with the writings of selected Eastern Fathers dealing with the subject of the work of the Holy Spirit and, in particular, the subjects of divinization or theosis. Wesley's doctrine of sanctification and perfection is best understood in light of the sources that contributed to these theological formulations. In doing so, this thesis will focus its research on the primary Wesley

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51 Henry Warner Bowden, “Ends and Means in Church History,” Church History, 54, no. 1, March 1985, 75 [74-88]. In the same article Bowden concludes, “Human records are partial, and they testify to events in language and thought-forms bounded by distinctive cultural contexts. Because later investigative interests do not always correspond to data available in the record, some questions simply cannot be answered.” (Ibid, 79). Wilhelm von Humboldt offered a similar perspective some one hundred-sixty-four years earlier: “The historian’s task is to present what actually happened. The more purely and completely he achieves this, the more perfectly has he solved his problem…. An event, however, is only partially visible in the world of the senses; the rest has to be added by intuition, inference, and guesswork. The manifestations of an event are scattered, disjointed, isolated; what it is that gives unity to this patchwork… remains removed from direct observation.” (William von Humboldt, “On the Historian’s Task,” in The Theory and Practice of History, Ibid, 5). Johann Lorenz von Mosheim (1694-1755) argues that the historian “must not only tell what was done [original emphasis], but also why this or that thing happened, that is, events are to be joined with their causes.” As far as Mosheim was concerned, “naked facts” only served to amuse readers, while the explanation of the “reasons” behind the facts, with due care not to fabricate causes, serves the reader by “sharpening discriminating powers, and rendering [him or her] wise.” (Johann Lorenz von Mosheim, Institutes of Ecclesiastical History, Ancient and Modern, trans. J. Murdock, ed. H. Soames, (London: Longman & Co., 1841, Vol. 1), 18; cited in James E. Bradley and Richard A. Muller, Church History, An Introduction to Research, Reference Works, and Methods, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 15.

52 Qualitative research, which includes the Comparative Method, is concerned with collecting and analyzing comparatively information in as many forms as possible. It tends to focus on exploring in as much detail as possible. The process of qualitative research is largely inductive, with the researcher generating meaning from the documents under review. The Comparative Methodology was chosen as the most effective research methodology to accomplish my thesis. In choosing this methodology it is recognized that “there are numerous problems inherent in the documents that demand critical reading and analysis and, most importantly, the document itself may point only indirectly toward the event or action that inspired it.” (James E. Bradley and Richard A. Muller, Ibid, 37). Further, Guba and Lincoln “argue the sets of answers given are in all cases human constructions [original emphasis]; that is, they are all inventions of the human mind and hence subject to human error. No construction is or can be incontrovertibly right; advocates of any particular construction must rely on persuasiveness and utility rather than proof in arguing their position…. The reader cannot be compelled to accept our analyses, or our arguments, on the basis of incontestable logic or indisputable evidence; we can only hope to be persuasive and to demonstrate the utility of our position…” (Egon G. Guba, Yvonna S. Lincoln, “Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research,” 108 [105-117].
records: the large number of Wesley's sermons, his journals and letters, his *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, the *Minutes* of his conferences, and any tracts or treatises that may bear upon the subject.\(^{53}\)

The primary writings of the Eastern Fathers that may have influenced Wesley will also be researched for this study. The Eastern Fathers consulted include Clement of Alexandria, Athanasius, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, Macarius the Egyptian, and Ephrem the Syrian.

Put another way, this thesis will attempt to address a number of questions:

1. Is the doctrine of entire sanctification or perfection in Wesley theologically distinct or similar to the doctrine of theosis in the Eastern Fathers? My research will look for identical or extremely similar language and phraseology between Wesley and the Eastern Fathers as it relates to sanctification and perfection. Additionally, I will be examining language and nomenclature, looking for direct linkage as a result of Wesley’s quoted use of the Eastern Fathers. Further, I will be examining language and nomenclature, looking for direct linkage, even if Wesley does not employ the language as part of a quote, but simply as part of his loose or less than exact referencing.

2. Are the similarities significant enough and clear enough to outweigh any differences that may appear? In other words, does the strength of the similarities lead a reader of Wesley to infer influence more than the differences would lead one away from influence?

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\(^{53}\) The selections from Wesley and the Eastern Fathers were made on the basis of my research and reading into both. The writings selected deal with the subjects of pneumatology and theosis at a primary level. Additionally, the Eastern Fathers were chosen because Wesley quoted, recommended or referenced them some way in his works.
3. Is it possible through comparative analysis to demonstrate historical derivation and doctrinal influence from theosis to perfection?  

4. Was the Eastern Fathers’ influence on Wesley a primary influence or was the influence of the Fathers mediated in a secondary manner through the Patristic renaissance with the Church of England before and during Wesley’s era? Even within the limitations of this dissertation, I share Outler’s worry: “My concern is the reexamination of Wesley’s thought in the context of his eighteenth-century ambience and his backgrounds, reaching back into the tangle of the seventeenth-century controversies and their antecedents.”

5. To what degree was such influence by the Fathers (and however mediated) effective or responsive, that is, did the influence actually change the way Wesley conceived of sanctification and perfection, or did it somehow resonate with a theological outlook already in place, but whose expression was happily shaped by the discovery of patristic language and categories?

These questions are not arbitrary, incidental or anachronistic. As Randy Maddox asserts,

The central conviction driving the professionalization of Wesley Studies that has taken place over the last thirty-five years is the need to read Wesley in light of his own theological sources. The most focused debate that has formed around this conviction is the questions of which Christian theological traditions were most influential in the formation of Wesley's doctrinal convictions. This question may appear to be of merely antiquarian interest, but it actually plunges one into the most crucial disagreements over the meaning and implications of Wesley's writings. The reason for this is that the various theological traditions are driven by distinct fundamental concerns. These concerns provide the

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interpretive focus for each tradition's specific theological claims. As a result, different traditions can use the same terms or references with significantly varying emphases and implications. If one's task is to determine the distinctive emphases and implications of Wesley's theology, therefore, it is helpful to know which traditions were most influential in forming his doctrinal convictions, or to which tradition he bore the greatest similarity.\textsuperscript{56}

In approaching these questions, additional questions will be asked and answered that contribute to the methodology of this dissertation. For example, what specific sources did Wesley refer to directly or implicitly with regard to his pneumatological orientation? How can the Eastern Fathers’ influence be identified in Wesley? How much did Wesley assimilate the basic pneumatological themes of Eastern patristics, and how much was he influenced by individual writers who appropriated the doctrine of theosis within their particular synthesis? How precisely can the “influenced” language of Wesley be linked to the language of the Eastern Fathers in terms of his doctrine of perfection? As Howell and Prevenier caution,

\begin{quote}
…scholars are concerned with the way the author of one text takes over language from another, sometimes unconsciously, sometimes fully consciously, perhaps with the intent to represent the purloined text as original but more often in a deliberate effort to transmit the information from the former.\textsuperscript{57}
\end{quote}

Furthermore, even if research of parallel theological precepts in John Wesley and the Eastern Fathers does not reveal direct channels of influence, it may aid "the discovery of such channels and the common foundational ground upon which th[is] eighteenth-century Western divine and the Eastern Fathers stood."\textsuperscript{58} All historians bring questions to the evidential record. “They pose different questions as ways of gleaning information from records that rarely provide

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{56} Maddox, "Reading Wesley as a Theologian," 7.
\textsuperscript{57} Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier, \textit{From Reliable Sources, An Introduction to Historical Methods}, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001), 64.
\end{footnotes}
straightforward answers. Few documents speak directly to various inquiries, so the historian’s task is complicated...because...some questions simply cannot be answered.”

I recognize that although the significance of the Christian tradition on Wesley’s theology and practice cannot be overstated, nevertheless there is still a great deal more work that needs to be done on the specific channels by which that theology was transmitted to Wesley. Wesley has yet to be studied in any great breadth and depth in the light of his sources and their shaping influences on his thought. A portion of this work includes reading Wesley with attention given to both the historical and the historiographical contexts of his writing, especially as it relates to the social environs from which Wesley addressed his theology and the proximal influence on Wesley of the renaissance in patristic studies within the Church of England prior to and during his lifetime.

The patristic scholarship of the high church Anglicans during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries stood as a bridge between the Caroline divines of the early and mid-seventeenth century and the Oxford Movement of the nineteenth century, whose works are among the most important in the history of British patristic scholarship. In line with the Caroline divines and the Tractarians, high church Anglicans, in the fifty years following the Glorious Revolution of 1688-89, looked to the primitive church as the authoritative interpreter of scripture, the final arbitrators in doctrinal disputes, and as a model of Christian piety and discipline.

One strand of his Anglican context with which Wesley resonated was this renewed appreciation of early Christian theology and practice. Shontz goes as far as to conclude, “far from being an innovator within Protestantism with his teaching of Christian perfection, John

59 Bowden, Ibid, 79.
60 Gwang Seok Oh, John Wesley’s Ecclesiology, (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2008), xv.
61 Outler, Ibid, 98.
62 Howell and Prevenier, 19.
Wesley was the heir of a theological tradition firmly established in the Church of England.\textsuperscript{64} Kelly Carter notes that when analyzing the roots of Wesley’s emphasis on ancient Christianity, one must first examine the “obvious attention paid by Wesley to the literary productions of High Church Anglicans and others who shared their ecclesiology and their concern for the primitive church.”\textsuperscript{65}

John Wesley was the heir of a specific tradition of Anglican patristic study that had developed in the late 1500s and the 1600s. This Anglican tradition viewed the Church of England as the true heir of the "primitive" church, that is, the church of the earliest centuries, through at least the fourth or fifth century. Wesley had studied early Christian literature and he read a great deal of Anglican literature that valued their connection with the early church.

The Wesleys…were indeed influenced by the Christian tradition they inherited and took for granted; they were faithful to the liturgy, doctrines, and sacraments of the Church of England; they were influenced by the Eastern Fathers and by Roman Catholic mystical writers…. The Methodist revival assimilated the work of many Christians and many movements through the organizing and conceptualizing genius of John Wesley. However, the Wesleys were not the sum total of the influences on them. They did not consciously synthesize various strands of thought and organization and thereby create a great movement. To suggest this would be reductionism. What rather happened was that the Wesleys inherited a Christian tradition at the beginning of the eighteenth century that contained a cluster of elements that provided the background wherein they could develop their vision of God.\textsuperscript{66}

As previously noted, according to Robert Cornwall, “The patristic scholarship of the high church Anglicans during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries stood as a bridge between the Caroline divines of the early and mid-seventeenth century and the Oxford movement of the nineteenth century, whose works are among the most important in the history

\textsuperscript{64} William H. Shontz, "Anglican Influences on John Wesley's Soteriology," \textit{WTJ}, 32, 1, Spring 1997, 37 [33-52].
\textsuperscript{65} Kelly D. Carter, "The High Church Roots of John Wesley's Appeal to Primitive Christianity." 71.
of British patristic scholarship.”

“Wesley followed the example of the High Church tradition, with which he consciously identified himself, appealing to Scripture, Tradition, and Reason to justify his theology.”

Wesley wrote early in 1738 that, “The English writers, such as Bishop Beveridge, Bishop Taylor, and Mr. Nelson, a little relieved me…. Their accounts of Christianity I could easily see to be, in the main, consistent both with reason and Scripture.”

It has been suggested that a correlation between the scriptural ideas of perfection, sanctification, and love can be found in the writings of the Anglicans of this period.

Additionally, the writings of church moderates Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688), Henry More (1614-1687), Simon Patrick (1626-1707), John Smith (1618-1652), John Tillotson (1630-1694) and John Worthington (1618-1671) appear in the lists of books that Wesley read and published for use by his societies. Nevertheless, according to John C. English, “the extent to which the moderates influenced Wesley’s theology cannot be defined to the complete satisfaction of the historian.”

In this thesis, the primary nomenclature of choice within the comparative methodology is “influence.” Fisher has written perceptively regarding the movement within historical research away from causation and then back, but under a new language. “…historians…have eliminated the word “cause” from their vocabulary, but they have continued to construct cryptocausal interpretations. They have camouflaged causation behind words such as

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67 Cornwall, 303.
68 Shontz, 36.
69 Wesley, Works (BCE), 18, 212.
“influences,”…” Unwittingly guilty of such camouflage, I concur with Fisher when he defines a causal explanation as an “attempt to explain the occurrence of an event by reference to some of those antecedents which rendered its occurrence probable.” In terms of this thesis, a causal/influence explanation is the attempt to explain the occurrence of Wesley’s doctrine of perfection by reference to the antecedents of the Eastern Fathers’ doctrine of theosis that rendered Wesley’s pneumatological nuances probable.

To establish the regularistic causal proposition that \( X \) caused \( Y \), three things must be demonstrated. First, there must be a correlation between \( X \) and \( Y \). Second, there must be a proper temporal relationship in their occurrence. \( X \) must occur before \( Y \). Third, there must be at least a presumptive agency which connects them.\(^74\)

I should also add that I agree in part with Campbell et al in their methodological critique of the “source” approach to Wesley:

The demonstration of specific influences of early Christian beliefs of practices on Wesley…requires far more than simple comparisons between early Christian writers and his writings: it requires a systematic consideration of all the likely sources for such an influence.

Even when specific influences of early Christian beliefs or practices on John Wesley can be demonstrated…conclusions about Wesley’s own understanding of ancient Christianity, or about Wesley’s own uses of ancient traditions, do not always follow, because so many ancient Christian ideas and practices came to Wesley in mediated, or indirect, fashion.\(^75\)

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\(^{73}\) Ibid, 183.

\(^{74}\) Ibid, 169. In the case of this thesis, all three things can be demonstrated: First, the correlation between \( X \) and \( Y \) is found in the fact that only pneumatology and the doctrine of theosis and perfection are being considered in both subjects, Wesley and the Eastern Fathers. I am not discussing pneumatology in one and eschatology in a second. Second, there is a proper temporal relationship in their occurrence in that the Eastern Fathers existed in time prior to Wesley, and Third, there is a presumptive agency which connects them in the fact that Wesley declares his passion for the Eastern Fathers and widely borrows and quotes from them in the corpus of his writings. O’Toole adds, “In statistical work it is not necessary to prove that there are cause-and-effect relationships in every situation. Often, the establishment of the fact that there exists an association, and the measurement of its degree or intensity, are all that the investigator needs for the purposes of estimation and prediction” (A. L. O’Toole, *Elementary Practical Statistics*, (New York, NY: 1964), 243.

\(^{75}\) Campbell, *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity*, 3.
Campbell couches his critique with methodological solutions. His acknowledgment that a systematic consideration of sources is necessary to provide conclusions of influence is reasonable and in fact, a part of the purpose and scope of this dissertation. Further, by stating that conclusions do not *always* [emphasis mine] follow Wesley’s uses of ancient traditions, he simply affirms the need for careful study. Always does not preclude sometimes or often and it is not the intent of this dissertation, nor could it be, to demonstrate influences that are always primary in terms of the Eastern Fathers and Wesley. Campbell’s research although very helpful, is concerned more with “what Wesley himself believed about Christian antiquity…than [with] trying to discern the degree to which Christian antiquity may have molded Wesley.”

Further, and contrary to Campbell, who acknowledges that he restricted his own influence research in that he “resisted the temptation to see Wesley’s interests in ancient Christianity as evidence of his ‘High Church’ leanings,” I will explore carefully this potential influence as a necessary means of refining, positively or negatively, the early Patristic influences on Wesley.

Campbell and Heitzenrater are correct to direct scholarship to an exploration of the channels through which the influences of the Eastern Fathers were transmitted to Wesley. Nevertheless, there are many demonstrations, as this thesis will show, of the emphasis on and the influence of primitive Christianity on John Wesley.

Seung-an Im’s work on Wesley’s anthropology critiques the bipolar tendency to insist either that Wesley’s theology has a close affinity with Western theologies such as Anglicanism, or to posit that all of Wesley’s heroes and influencers from the age of Christian antiquity are

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77 Campbell, Ibid, 10.
Eastern. His conclusion that it is more appropriate to refer to Wesley’s theology as comprehensive, that is, to view “Wesley to be both Western and Eastern,”\textsuperscript{78} does not undermine the pursuit of this dissertation, but offers a caution in reading too much into Eastern sources.

V. Overview

Following this chapter, the second chapter of this thesis will begin with an explanation of the influence of Wesley’s family in terms of his early interest in patristics. Additionally, this chapter will explore the social and religious context of which Wesley was a part and how that context may have fueled his theological emphases. The final section of this chapter will then detail Wesley’s personal orientation toward the Eastern Fathers in an overview fashion. The chapter will also detail the problems and or challenges in determining influence between the Eastern Fathers and John Wesley, with particular emphases on Wesley’s lack of preciseness in his writings in terms of his sources.

The third chapter will explore in depth the patristic renaissance with the Church of England from the late 17\textsuperscript{th} century on into Wesley’s era. Additionally, this chapter will attempt to identify the primary ways in which the Anglican community used the study of patristics and what, if any, influence these usages and studies had on John Wesley.\textsuperscript{79} Eamon Duffy, in his work on the Anglican revival of primitive Christianity, states that Wesley was the “last great

\textsuperscript{78} Seung-An Im, John Wesley’s Theological Anthropology: A Dialectic Tension Between the Latin Western Patristic Tradition (Augustine) and the Greek Eastern Patristic Tradition (Gregory of Nyssa), Drew University Ph.D. Thesis, 1994, 3-4.

\textsuperscript{79} Given the scope of this potential influence on Wesley’s theology, a separate chapter will be devoted to this area.
Anglican exponent” of patristic purity. This chapter will attempt to determine whether Wesley’s passion for the primitive church and hence his pneumatological formulations were more directly or primarily connected to the work of the Anglican scholars at this time, or did their work propel him back to the Eastern Fathers as a primary source for theological ruminations.

Chapter four will focus on the specific Eastern Church Fathers who may have influenced Wesley and in doing so; investigate their understanding and declaration of pneumatology in terms of sanctification and theosis. Initially, this chapter will explore in broad terms some of the theological contrasts between Eastern and Western Theology. From this point, an Eastern understanding of theosis will be presented in detail. Finally, the balance of the chapter will focus on the doctrines of selected Greek Fathers and Wesley's use of such Fathers in the corpus of his writings, with an initial conclusionary intent for each.

The fifth chapter will examine numerous biblical texts that Wesley commented on or drew theological content from in order to support his view of perfection. In doing so, a parallel task will be to compare Wesley's comments and downloaded textual content with those of the Greek Fathers who have been thus far appropriated in this study. Additionally, this chapter will attempt to place in parallel view, not only Wesley's comments on selected texts of Scripture, but also the Greek Father's comments on the same verses. This parallel view will assist in identifying apparent correlations and comparisons between Wesley’s pneumatological formulations in terms of the doctrine of perfection and the doctrine of theosis of the Eastern Fathers.

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The final chapter of this thesis will identify and summarize any conclusions that can be reached based on the research in this work.

VI. Delimitations and Implications

Beyond the above-mentioned research, the primary challenges related to determining the answers to this thesis’s questions revolve around Wesley’s lack of theological systematization in his writings and the imprecise recording by Wesley of his sources. Wesley’s quotations are rarely identified and rarely exact.\(^81\) Further, in certain circumstances it appears that Wesley revised, adapted and even edited his sources rather than preserving their original meaning. Scott Jones insists that Wesley’s “references to writings from antiquity are sometimes emphasized with quotation marks, often they are not.”\(^82\) At issue in this thesis is how one can demonstrate how a cluster of elements or sources provided the necessary background for Wesley to develop strands of his theology. In other words, what elements, from what sources, influenced the theological formations of Wesley, and to what degree? The reality is, as Outler observes, “Historians have no choice but to present their inwardly disciplined accounts of objective happenings in the full knowledge of the constant dialectic between event and interpretation in one’s own, or in any others’, historical narrative. Historical plausibility is very different from certainty…”\(^83\)

Nevertheless, through my research and writing I believe I can contribute to this particular field of Wesleyan and Patristic studies:

\(^{83}\) Outler, “Theodosius’ Horse,” 12. Bowden adds that “most often, research produces ambiguous results that do not fully confirm or completely deny early hypotheses.” (Bowden, “Ends and Means in Church History”), 81.
1. I will provide a more thorough and refined template through which to analyze the questions of eastern patristic “influence” on Wesley, in the midst of a good deal of confusion on the subject.

2. Methodologically I will be offering a disciplined example of how to pursue the question of influence in a manner that can be useful to future scholars who are seeking to elucidate other aspects of Wesley’s theology.

3. I will be clarifying substantively Wesley’s own theology of sanctification and, as a result, offering a way to properly understand it.

4. I will demonstrate a multi-dimensional source analysis for Wesley that covers multiple eras and potential sources and clarifies where indeed the primary source influence is clear. This is in contrast to previous research that tends to be one-dimensional in its source analysis.

5. I will dissect and subsequently present an analysis of the patristic theology of theosis and Wesley’s theology of perfection in order to demonstrate a clear line of absorption from the fathers to Wesley.

Finally, in terms of future research, although Wesley is often accused of not being a theologian—primarily because his works are not systematized—my thesis should open a door for reconsidering Wesley’s non-theologian status, insomuch as his linkage to the early fathers is more than a linkage to method and ecclesiastical order. Wesley’s theological underpinnings emerge from the theological works of the fathers, and therefore future Wesleyan scholars may be able to recast Wesley in the mold of early patristic theologians and perhaps reorder Wesley’s works into a theological framework that finds its template in the works of those fathers to whom Wesley is indebted.
Additionally, my thesis may also prompt further theological investigations regarding Wesley and his patristic roots. Certainly good work has been done with Wesley’s ecclesiology, practical theology and to some degree Wesley’s anthropology. Nevertheless, my thesis will encourage renewed efforts in analyzing Wesley’s full-orbed theological specialties in light of the influence of the early fathers.
Chapter 2

Wesley's Early Family Context and Theological Orientation

I. A Brief Overview of Wesley's Family, Social, and Religious Contexts

This chapter is formulated to provide an introduction and overview of John Wesley's early years, and in particular, review any predilections in terms of the Eastern or Greek Fathers that may have emerged during this period of his life. Further, this chapter will provide some preliminary connections between the works of Wesley and selected Greek Fathers, anticipating more detailed connectors in chapters four and five.

John Wesley was born in 1703 in Epworth, Lincolnshire, England. He was the fifteenth child and second surviving son of Susanna and Samuel Wesley. Although John’s father was a staunch High Church man in the Church of England, both of John’s grandparents were Puritan Nonconformists, and as a result, John was raised in an atmosphere of piety and Puritan discipline. Samuel Wesley, although born into a Nonconformist home and tradition, renounced the Dissenting movement and attached himself to the established church while still a young man.1 "The liturgy, loyalty and piety of late seventeenth-century Anglicanism…were decisive factors in Samuel Wesley's change of allegiance."2 John's mother Susannah, at the age of thirteen, also concluded that the theology and cause of the Dissenting movement was one that she could no longer be a part of.3 John would declare much later in life, "I am a High

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Churchman, the son of a High Churchman, bred up from my childhood in the highest notions of passive obedience and non-resistance."\(^4\)

At the age of five, John was dramatically rescued from a fire that destroyed his father’s rectory.\(^5\) By about 1737 Wesley adapted for himself the biblical phrase of a “brand plucked from the burning,”\(^6\) and the phrase became part of the Wesley legend declaring not only providential deliverance from the fire but also pointing to a divine and extraordinary mission for him.\(^7\) On November 26, 1753, Wesley, obviously prematurely, composed his own epitaph, in which he emphasized the significance of the fiery rescue. "Here lieth the Body of John Wesley, A Brand Plucked out of the Burning: Who died of a consumption in the fifty-first year of his age…”\(^8\) In the words of one biographer, “John Wesley had been spared in order that he should do great work. He was a “brand plucked from the burning” and must offer others salvation from even fiercer flames.”\(^9\) Although dramatically marked by such an experience, there is also no doubt that John Wesley was branded distinctly by the influence of both his parents.

Wesley then was raised in a home where both of his parents emerged from a background of Nonconformity to settle within the parameters of the established High Church. According to Rack, many of the High Church clergy stressed, "in varying degrees…a special reverence for the teaching and practice of the 'primitive' church of the first five centuries.”\(^10\)

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\(^6\) Amos 4:11; Zechariah 3:2 (Revised Standard Version).
\(^10\) Rack, 26.
Further, "high church views...were strongly marked in the early career of John Wesley as they were in his father and brothers.... Wesley's original pursuit of 'primitive Christianity' was very much in the High Church and indeed Nonjuror mode."\textsuperscript{11} Both parents "rebelleed against the Puritanism of their upbringings to become staunchly supportive of the High Church as adults."\textsuperscript{12} His parents had a profound impact upon him and "it was through them that he was exposed to the currents of religious movements of considerable antiquity."\textsuperscript{13}

In fact, with Samuel Wesley's High Churchism and his role in the religious Societies movement, and with Susanna's High Churchism..., it would be surprising if high Church primitivism was not a frequent topic of study and discussion in the Wesley home. Obviously, what is known of Wesley's early family life points to a High Church background as the source for the later Methodist emphasis on primitive Christianity.\textsuperscript{14}

After completing his B.A. degree, John's father urged him to become a clergyman and with his mother's support of this urging,\textsuperscript{15} John complied, beginning studies in divinity in 1720. His earliest influences were spiritual writers rather than theologians. However, "He then turned to the early fathers of the church, among them Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp, Clement of Rome, and "Macarius the Egyptian,"... whose work owed principally to the great patriarch of Greek orthodoxy, Gregory of Nyssa."\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{11} Rack, 26.
\textsuperscript{12} Kelly D. Carter, "The High Church Roots of John Wesley's Appeal to Primitive Christianity," Restoration Quarterly, 37, no. 2, 1995, 75 [65-79].
\textsuperscript{14} Carter, 75. "This impulse to restore the purity of the early church was an established tradition within mainstream Anglicanism that was mediated to Wesley through his high church predecessors including his parents..." Geordan Hammond, "High Church Anglican Influences on John Wesley's Conception of Primitive Christianity, 1732-1735," Anglican and Episcopal History; Jun 2009; 78, 2, 174 [174-207].
\textsuperscript{15} According to James R. Joy, "When, as an undergraduate, John...associated more and more with books, especially those dealing with personal religion. Much of his correspondence with his mother concerned his reading." (James R. Joy, "Wesley: Man of a thousand books and a book," Religion in Life, Vol. VIII, Winter, No.1, 1939, 72 [71-84].
As Wesley announced his intentions to take Holy Orders, his father Samuel advised him to read patristic authors. Samuel particularly reinforced the importance of Chrysostom to his son in a series of letters in which he recommended carefully selected sources for John to read. In the first of these letters, he urged John to read whatever he desired in the afternoons, but to be certain to "Get Thirlby's Chrysostom De Sacerdotio. Master it; digest it." In July of the same year (1725), he offers similar instruction when he writes, "Master St. Chrysostom, our Articles and form of ordination. Bear up stoutly against the world, etc. Keep a good, an honest, and a pious heart." Again, less than a month later Samuel reminds John that he can have no "better directions (except Timothy and Titus) than Chrysostom De Sacerdotio, and our Form of Ordination—and 'God forbid that I should ever cease to pray for you!'" In the first of these letters, mentioned above, the elder Wesley mentions a manuscript he had written that he would send to John via his brother Sam. In the year of his father's death (1735), John Wesley published his father's seventy-one page manuscript as, *Advice to a Young Clergyman*. Not surprisingly, approximately half the pages are devoted to advice on what a prospective clergyman should study. A significant portion of the reading advice focused on the study of the Church Fathers, including the epistles of Ignatius and the Greek Fathers: Athanasius, Basil, and Chrysostom.

20 Wesley, "From the Revd. Samuel Wesley, The Works of John Wesley (BCE), Ibid, 158.
21 It is important to note that the elder Wesley cited several of the principal participants in the patristic revival in the Church of England including: John Pearson, George Bull, William Beveridge, William Cave, and Anthony Horneck. John Wesley's "early Oxford reading put him into touch with many mainstream Anglican theologians, most of whom drew on the Fathers and were enamored with the early church." Geordan Hammond, "High Church Anglican Influences on John Wesley's Conception of Primitive Christianity, 1732-1735, Anglican and Episcopal History, Jun 2009; 78, 2, 192 [174-207].
Whatever the effect of this pre-ordination advice, it is clear that patristic literature grew in its importance for Wesley after his ordination, being due in part to the greater need he now felt for an exegetical and theological interpretive authority. In 1729, while at Oxford, John joined a group his brother had founded for "bible study, mutual discipline in devotion, and frequent Communion. This group had developed a keen interest in the ancient liturgies and the monastic piety of the fourth century 'desert fathers.'" Although the Church in its first centuries was only one source for Wesley's theology, his deep understanding of the heart and soul of early Christianity underlies his entire theological thought. Wesley himself later summarized the roots of his appreciation of the early church:

From a child I was taught to love and reverence the Scripture, the oracles of God; and, next to these, to esteem the primitive Fathers, the writers of the three first centuries. Next after the primitive church, I esteemed our own, the Church of England, as the most scriptural national Church in the world. I therefore not only assented to all the doctrines, but observed all the rubric in the Liturgy; and that with all possible exactness, even at the peril of my life. In this judgment, and with this spirit, I went to America, strongly attached to the bible, the primitive church and the Church of England, from which I would not vary in one jot or tittle on any account whatever.

Such a directional affirmation is reinforced when one considers the sheer volume of Wesley's reading. Wesley first discussed his reading in measurable terms in his journal on September 1,
1778. In reviewing his previous forty-five years, he surmised, "perhaps, indeed, I may have read five or six hundred books more than I had then…"\(^{26}\)

His readings in the history of Christian thought range over the centuries, East and West—with many figures and volumes so obscure that one wonders where he found them all. His own recorded bibliography runs to more than fourteen hundred different authors, with nearly three thousand separate items from them (ranging from pamphlets to twelve-volume sets).\(^{27}\)

While commenting on Wesley's religious and social impact, Cell extols Wesley's life-long reading, colossal industry and writing.

Plus extensive general reading, he mastered on the average one solid book in divinity monthly. He knew ten languages and made good use of them. His published works as author, editor, translator, passed the four hundred mark. His own distinctive writings fill upwards of twenty-five massive volumes. He records the fact he examined minutely every word of the Greek text of the New Testament. He made an independent translation of the New Testament, the true merit and importance of which have never been explored and appreciated…His discipline in historical theology was extensive. He read widely in the Patristics and in the masters of Protestant theology, especially Luther, Calvin, Arminius, Episcopius and the Anglican divines.\(^{28}\)

Wesley, in his preface to "The Epistles of the Apostolic Fathers," outlined several reasons for his use of the Fathers. First was their close proximity to the Apostles, which assured in his mind that their teachings were the "pure doctrine of the Gospel." Secondly, Wesley believed the Fathers possessed the "most comprehensive and perfect knowledge of the faith as it is in Jesus." Thirdly, Wesley believed that the Fathers were "persons of consummate piety; adorned with all those Christian virtues which they so affectionately recommend to us." This piety of life came, not because of their own efforts or achievements, but because they had been "endued with the extraordinary assistance of the Holy Spirit," and "contented themselves to declare


these things in a plain and simple manner; and yet with such efficacy and power as surpassed all the rhetoric in the world."^{29}

In spite of such an august and scholarly beginning to his life of ministry, it was not until 1738 that John Wesley experienced a spiritual epiphany of great impact. Under the influence of the Moravian Peter Bohler, who instructed him in the assurance of salvation by faith, along with his reading of Luther’s commentary on Galatians, which emphasized justification by faith alone, he reluctantly attended a Moravian meeting near his old school, Charterhouse. Wesley himself describes what occurred after that.

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate-Street, where one was reading Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone [emphasis mine] for salvation: And an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my [original emphasis] sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.^{30}

Shortly after this experience, in September 1738, Wesley embarked on his life work. His objective was clear. He set out to “reform the nation, particularly the Church, and to spread Scriptural holiness over the land.” John Wesley had no doubt as to why he was alive. “It was to save as many souls as he could and to multiply that number by extending his ministry through the efforts of noble helpers. The churchmen of his own day were left standing breathless and shocked” by his efforts.^{31} He joined his brother Charles in preaching the truth of the gospel wherever he was permitted. However, such places were becoming more difficult to locate, since the Anglican congregations soon closed their doors to the Wesleys because of their

enthusiasm. Eventually they were invited to the religious societies that existed at that time within the Church of England. The next year, John Wesley discarded his ecclesiastical and High Church views, related to the Church as edifice, to follow the example of George Whitefield and began preaching in the fields around Bristol. He knew himself to be an apostolic man, sent by God with an exceptional commission to evangelize Great Britain. Commission notwithstanding, John Wesley faced incredibly difficult challenges in the fulfillment of his calling.

In common with other great people, Wesley was a product of his times, and much of what he said and did, as well as what he read, was shaped by his particular understanding of the people and events that surrounded him. Certainly any study of Wesley's theology, at whatever level, must consider to some degree the social and cultural milieu in which he lived. Having said that, "(t)here is no consensus among professional historians about Wesley's context.

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32 It is not within the purview of this dissertation to examine in detail the Religious Societies of England during the Eighteenth century. However, some brief comments are in order. "In 1664, three years after immigrating to England from Germany, Anthony Horneck…was admitted to Anglican holy orders and made vicar of All Hallows Church…Horneck is key for Pietism's migration into Restoration Anglicanism…. Horneck's Religious Societies…were within the established church and under the supervision of its clergy. They encouraged devotion to the church's public worship and sacramental life. This did not, however, deflect suspicion. Despite high church devotional practices, these societies…were often regarded as a threat….The groups began with considerable spiritual excitement and attracted many young people. By the 1680s, attendance at the sacrament in London began to increase, perhaps due to the stress laid upon it in the societies. Like many movements of revival before and since, as time passed, fervor diminished, moralism increased and philanthropic work became an end in itself. Furthermore, popularity often depended on the political climate…. (and) in 1718 there were thirty Religious Societies meeting in the London area. See Scott Thomas Kisker, Foundation for Revival, Anthony Horneck, the Religious Societies, and the Construction of an Anglican Pietism, (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2008), xvii, xxiv-xxv. According to Baker "Many religious societies existed in London and Westminster (and a few elsewhere) which had originally been founded under church auspices but were no longer under close clerical supervision. Many of them had quite lost their spiritual vitality, and Wesley believed it an important part of his mission to revitalize them by an infusion of what was generally coming to be termed 'Methodist enthusiasm; though in fact it owed much to Moravian pietism. After returning from his pilgrimage to Herrnhut…Wesley attempted to reform the religious societies, in general by encouraging them to deeper spirituality…" Baker, John Wesley and the Church of England, 60-1.


Indeed, at present they are probably more divided than they have ever been about how to conceptualize the period in which he lived." The earliest lenses placed on the eighteenth century church frequently spoke of lax standards and pastoral negligence during an era in which the country could ill afford such an approach. More recently, the lenses have become more rose colored in their assessment of the eighteenth century church.

Yet, as might be expected with historical fashions, revisionism has been followed by a post-revisionism, which is wary of some of the upbeat claims of the revisionists and is concerned that they are ironing out some of the real structural and pastoral problems faced by the Church in this period.... There is at the moment, then, a debate between optimists and pessimists about the state of the Church in the eighteenth century.

Throughout the eighteenth century, the Church of England was the dominant church in the country and had at least the nominal allegiance of ninety percent of the population. It was dominant not only in numbers, but also in legal rights and privileges, social weight and

36 M. Dorothy George offers a bold assessment, "The later eighteenth century, according to the more modern school of social historians, is regarded as the beginning of a dark age, in which there was progressive degradation of the standards of life, under the blight of growing industrialism, while the earlier part of the century is considered a golden age, one of those periods when English working-class prosperity was at its height. The social history of London obstinately and emphatically refused to adjust itself to this formula. There is a cleavage, certainly, about the middle of the century, but it is improvement, not deterioration, which can be traced about 1750 and becomes marked between 1780 and 1820." M. Dorothy George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century*, (Chicago, IL: Academy Chicago Publishers, 2000), 15. George does acknowledge that the problems of poverty, sanitation and police were greatest in the out-parishes, the areas outside of the city proper. Spurr, in his generally positive review of the late seventeenth-century England, admits "The Anglican minister's profound sense of being beleaguered was exacerbated by a sharp awareness of their pastoral mission. They battled against indifference, immorality and disdain because they believed that the English were in danger of squandering their chance to placate an irate God. They felt the sins of the nation deeply..." John Spurr, *England in the 1670s,* *This Masquerading Age,* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 235. Christopher Hill is clearly despairing of the late sixteenth to early seventeenth centuries, as "at least fifty per cent of the population had nothing to leave [in their wills]. We know far too little about those who lived in mud houses, ate rye and bran bread, and got a high proportion of their calories (if they were lucky) from home-brewed beer. Even at the end of our period...the common people walked barefoot all over the north. Children of the poor...seldom got more than bread and water up to the age of three years, and little enough of that...Three out of every four Englishmen in [1714] could not afford medical advice or treatment. Three out of every four babies born in one London parish died almost immediately." See Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution, 1603-1714*, (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, UK: Routledge Classics, 1980), 307.
37 Ibid. 27. It is not within the parameters of this dissertation to present and examine the various and sundry opinions regarding the condition of the Church of England during the eighteenth century. My persuasion is that the atmosphere of the time was socially bankrupt and the condition of the church, although not mirroring the culture completely, had indeed fallen on depressed and bankrupt times that call for renewal at the very least.
influence, and as a recognized part of the constitution along with King, Lords and Commons.\(^{38}\)

Nevertheless, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, “the Established Church slept,”\(^{39}\) and in fact, “the eighteenth century church has had a black reputation among religious historians.”\(^{40}\)

"The feasts of the Church were ignored; daily worship was neglected; buildings of the Anglican Christians, and to some extent of the Dissenters, resembled only an external morality."\(^{41}\)

Donald Spaeth, in his detailed and exacting work on this era, is less inclined to paint the canvas of the Church of England with such a broad stroke, and in fact narrows the blame to a specific fault among the clergy in general.

Although recent research suggests that the Church of England coped better than had previously been thought, it nevertheless lost ground, at least relative to other churches, during the eighteenth century. Why did it suffer this erosion of support? Structural, pastoral and economic factors played a part, as did competition from evangelical churches. Yet it will be argued in this book that the key to the decline of the Church lies in the nature of relationships between the people and the clergy. Its origins can be found in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, in the period between the Restoration and the birth of Methodism. It was in these years that the Church and its clergy revealed the rigidity of mind and the isolation from the laity that made them increasingly unable to command popular affection….The Church was ultimately unable to retain popular support because it was unwilling to relinquish any control over worship to the laity… Indeed, its institutional defects reflected a clerical mindset that was defensive and inflexible. The Church repeatedly showed itself unable to change to meet circumstances….The greatest danger to the Church came not from without but from within.\(^{42}\)

Spaeth’s research certainly warrants consideration, but appears to be so narrowly confined as to eliminate from consideration other legitimate factors that do include the social environs along with the broader ecclesiastical failings of the period. Wesley experienced and lived through the

\(^{38}\) Rack, 10.
\(^{39}\) Hattersley, 2.
\(^{40}\) Rack, 11.
broader context. In his essay on "The Doctrine of Original Sin" (1757), Wesley leaves no stone unturned in his assessment of religion and faith throughout the various demographics of England.

The generality of English peasants are not only grossly, stupidly, I had almost said, brutishly ignorant as to all the arts of this life, but eminently so with regard to religion and the life to come. Ask a countryman, What is faith? What is repentance? What is holiness? What is true religion? And he is no more able to give you an intelligible answer, than if you were to ask him about the north-east passage. Is there, then, any possibility that they should practice what they know nothing of? If religion is not even in their heads, can it be in their hearts or lives? It cannot. Nor is there the least savour thereof, either in their tempers or conversation. Neither in the one, nor the other, do they rise one jot above the pitch of a Turk or a Heathen. Perhaps it will be said, "Whatever the clowns in the midland counties are, the people near the sea-coasts are more civilized."

Yes, great numbers of them are, in and near all our ports; many thousands there are civilized by smuggling. The numbers herein, upon all our coasts, are far greater than can be imagined. But what reason, and what religion, have these that trample on all laws, divine and human, by a course of thieving, or receiving stolen goods, of plundering their King and country?.... A smuggler, then (and, in proportion, every seller or buyer of uncustomed goods,) is a thief of the first order, a highwayman or pickpocket of the worst sort. Let not any of those prate about reason or religion.

John Wesley wanted to experience salvation in its fullness, but the world he lived in did not encourage such a quest for inward and outward holiness. Indeed, “the Anglican Church in the early eighteenth century was self-satisfied and hardly energetic in seeking to live out the gospel.” As early as 1744, Wesley in his "An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion" wrote a plain account indicting the religion of his time. "These appeals constitute Wesley's most important apologia for his own doctrine and for his movement as an evangelical

43 John Wesley, "The Doctrine of Original Sin," The Works of John Wesley, Vol. 9, 225-6. One might argue that Wesley's point of reference is jaundiced and therefore, not an accurate one. This begs the question, because it is Wesley's point of reference that becomes his reality and as a result, prompts, at least in part, his approach to preaching and theology. Even if his perception is not accurate, it hardly matters in light of his theological emphasis in terms of holiness and his practical theological emphasis in terms of meeting the needs, as he perceived them, of social blight.

order within the national church—beset as it was by the apathy of nominal Christianity and by the rising tides of rationalism and unbelief." ⁴⁵

We see (and who does not?) the numberless follies and miseries of our fellow-creatures. We see, on every side, either men of no religion at all, or men of a lifeless, formal religion. We are grieved at the sight; and should greatly rejoice, if by any means we might convince some that there is a better religion to be attained,—a religion worthy of God that gave it. And this we conceive to be no other than love; the love of God and of all mankind; that loving God with all our heart, and soul, and strength, as having first loved us, as the fountain of all the good we have received, and of all we ever hope to enjoy; and the loving every soul which God hath made, every man on earth, as our own soul. This love we believe to be the medicine of life, the never-failing remedy for all the evils of a disordered world, for all the miseries and vices of men. ⁴⁶

Some suggested that at this time in history, error had “made the greatest headway in the Church of England.” ⁴⁷ In the first half of the eighteenth century, there was undeniably a readiness to assume that natural theology had displaced or even disposed of theology proper. The idea of God had not been dismissed, indeed “the ordered universe described in Newtonian astronomy seemed to demonstrate the indispensability of God as the First Cause or Grand Geometer.” ⁴⁸ This “new” God was a less personal and approachable deity than the God revealed in the Scripture. He was more like the God of the Deists—the eternal watchmaker, who made the clock of the universe, wound it up, set it going and left it alone without any further interference. “The refusal of the Deists to allow God to intervene in the day to day running of His creation is in marked contrast to Wesley’s readiness to recognize the hand of God in the most mundane happenings.” ⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Ibid, 4.
‘A deluge of everything that’s ill has overflowed Christendom, and does so still in most places’, the most important publication of English deism observed; there is scarcely anyone who cares about any kind of Christianity, not to mention orthodoxy, was the Protestant version…. All orthodox believers in sound doctrine were warned against those who until our own time had continued to revolt against the faith because of the conviction that all the faiths are exhausted and that most of the Christian churches…in our century were in a state of decline.\textsuperscript{50}

Wesley’s emphasis on the experiential side of Christian faith stood in stark contrast to the dullness associated with contemporary English Deism.\textsuperscript{51} Although rightly recoiling from the rigorous penitential demands of the Roman Catholic Church, by the beginning of the eighteenth century there was little, if any indication of public or private repentance in the Evangelical churches.\textsuperscript{52}

The movement to reform the clergy in life and morals and to make them genuine witnesses of Jesus pervaded the churches at the beginning of the eighteenth century…. (Further, although) theological erudition was not to be despised, the personal faith of the theological student and future pastor was to be his primary concern. For the life of students, including students of theology, at the universities [was] so unchristian that, as orthodox professors had to admit defensively, it sometimes erupted in scandal, because students were not having

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid, 10.
\textsuperscript{52} Pelikan, 52. Pelikan's choice of the word "churches" could be misleading, as the evangelical revival of the period was not located primarily in a specific church or churches, but was widely spread among extant congregations. According to Bebbington, "Evangelical religion is a popular Protestant movement that has existed in Britain since the 1730s." D.W. Bebbington, \textit{Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 980s}, (London, UK: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 20. "This new popular Protestant movement, born in the evangelical revivals of the 1730's, and based around the quadrilateral of theological concepts combining conversionism, activism, Bibliicism and crucicentrism [original emphasis] stood in stark contrast to the various Protestant flavors that preceded it. See David Ceri Jones, "Calvinistic Methodism and the Origins of Evangelicalism in England," (Eds.) Michael A. G. Haykin and Kenneth J. Stewart, (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing, 2008), 104-5. "The Methodist movement was only one element, albeit the most vibrant, of the religious revivals that affected many parts of England after 1737…and account(ed) for the rise of the broader and more expansive eighteenth-century evangelical movement" (Ibid, 105). Jones argues that in the second half of the seventeenth century the religious monopoly in England held by the Anglicans had been curtailed or limited. "Through organizations like the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the Society for the Reformation of Manners and the Society for the Propogation of the Gospel, as well as a large number of private devotional societies, many Anglicans tried to raise the spiritual temperature through voluntary means like education, the publication of devotional literature and the inculcation of godly standards of behavior… The Evangelical Revival started out as a renewal movement within these religious societies…. Protestants of many different hues could happily congregate, evangelicals were able to mobilize the energies of their followers towards spreading vital heart religions, and, once established, venture into the uncharted waters of more radical social action" (Jones, Ibid, 108-9, 112).
it impressed upon them that holy life is not of less consequence than diligence and study.\textsuperscript{53}

Theologically the challenge of deism was the focus of some of the best minds of the church.\textsuperscript{54}

In an age “when Anglican bishops were attempting to lighten the burden of belief, the doctrine of the Trinity (had become) particularly embarrassing,” resulting "in the growth of Unitarianism."\textsuperscript{55} Although the movement toward “reform” was spoken of, the reality was that

Much of eighteenth century England was wholly neglected by clergy who were concerned for neither their parishioners’ spiritual nor social welfare...The church in general did not know or did not care that such conditions\textsuperscript{56} existed—that only one child in four, born in London, survived and that infant mortality in the burgeoning towns of the Midlands and the north was even higher. Nor did it show much concern for the moral degradation that accompanied poverty. Religion was a matter of habit, not conviction. Christians were required to do little more than perform the rituals of formal observance under the supervision of priests who regarded the church as less of a calling than a profession for gentlemen.\textsuperscript{57}

The unlikely revolutionary, John Wesley, led the revolt against an increasingly nominal Christianity. He warned in his sermons that some of the social extremities that enveloped much of Great Britain were the result of personal sin and divine judgment. Using 2 Samuel 24:17 as his text, Wesley lays out his perspective clearly.

\begin{quote}
We likewise have sinned and we are punished; and perhaps these are only the beginning of sorrows. Perhaps the angel is now stretching out his hand over England to destroy it.... Will it not be most profitable for us, to consider every one his own sins, as bringing sufferings both on himself and others; to say, "Lo, I have sinned, I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done?"... That the people suffer, none can deny;--that they are afflicted in a more than
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{53} Ibid, 53-4.
\item\textsuperscript{54} Scott Jameson Jones, “Wesley, John” \textit{Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters}, (ed.) Donald K. McKim, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 385. "The Church of England was less short of policy in the early eighteenth century than it has commonly been since that time. There had been those at the beginning of the century who had sought to fertilize their world by the pure streams of modern knowledge, and appeal to reason as now understood; they had finally tied themselves in knots over the doctrine of the Trinity, and had let loose radicalisms in church and state which no one cared for" See W. R. Ward, \textit{The Protestant Evangelical Awakening}, (Cambridge, UK: The Cambridge University Press, 2002), 311.
\item\textsuperscript{55} Andrews, 7.
\item\textsuperscript{56} The conditions referred to are primarily extreme poverty and infant mortality.
\item\textsuperscript{57} Hattersley, 3.
\end{itemize}
ordinary manner. Thousands and tens of thousands are at this day deeply afflicted through want of business. It is true, that this want is in some measure removed in some large and opulent towns. But it is also true, that this is far, very far, from being the general case of the kingdom. Nothing is more sure, than that thousands of people in the west of England, throughout Cornwall in particular, in the north, and even in the midland counties, are totally unemployed. Hence those who formerly wanted nothing, are now in want of all things. They are so far from the plenty they once enjoyed, that they are in the most deplorable distress, deprived not only of the conveniences, but most of the necessaries, of life. I have seen not a few of these wretched creatures…standing in the streets, with pale looks, hollow eyes, and meager limbs; or creeping up and down like walking shadows. I have known families…reduced to just as much raiment as they had on, and as much food as they could gather in the field. To this one or other of them repaired once a day, to pick up the turnips which the cattle had left; which they boiled, if they could get a few sticks, or, otherwise, ate them raw.\(^{58}\)

Later in the same sermon, Wesley includes the moral and spiritual torpor of the times as a consequence of personal and national sin, including the sin of the clergy as a whole.\(^{59}\) Yet, by all reports he did not look the part of the leader of a revolt against nominal Christianity. John Wesley was no more than five feet six inches tall. He enjoyed piercing blue eyes, but one biographer described his nose as “long and bony.”\(^{60}\) He never wore a wig and allowed his hair to grow unfashionably long—initially because he could not afford a haircut but, as he grew older and more famous, because it was the appearance that his followers recognized. To passing acquaintances, he did not seem to be a man who could move multitudes. “His manner was invariably eager and intense, and his conversation almost always didactic.”\(^{61}\)

\(^{59}\) Ibid, 403-5.
\(^{60}\) Hattersley, 3.
\(^{61}\) Ibid.
Nevertheless, many people recognized John Wesley as a significant man in his own day, even referring to him as “one of the most extraordinary characters this or any age ever produced.”

Schmidt offers a clear description of Wesley and his century, particularly in terms of the religious climate of the time.

To be precise: the eighteenth century, within which the whole of his long life fell, was the age of reason…. In the case of Christianity this meant setting natural religion above God's revelation in Jesus Christ. Most of those who pursued this aim did so not with the intention of replacing Christianity but of supplying its deficiencies. They were convinced that their programme would liberate the basic Christian principles from the suspicion of being gratuitous assertions and ensure their general credibility. John Wesley could not go along with enterprises of this kind. Here he could only voice an emphatic No. To his mind, the pristine Christianity of the apostles supplied man's every need. All his zeal was devoted to this. He was utterly convinced that primitive Christianity could be restored in his own day and age, as in every generation.

John Wesley remained a member of the Church of England until his death. He would not schedule Methodist meetings to conflict with Anglican services. However, during the his ministry Wesley “rode 250,000 miles on the roads of England, Scotland, and Ireland to preach 42,000 sermons. Besides this he published 233 books.” His journals detail traveling four to five thousand miles a year; rising at four in the morning for over sixty years, and preaching at five in the morning for over fifty years. According to Wesley himself, he estimated that he preached some 800 sermons each year. At age eighty-six Wesley preached a hundred sermons in sixty towns in nine weeks. On February 23, 1791, a week before his death, he preached his final

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64 Wesley, "Journals from May 6, 1760 to September 12, 1773, May 14, 1765," Works, III, 211. See also, Richard P. Heitzenrater, The Elusive Mr. Wesley, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 27.
sermon from Isaiah 55:6, “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near.”

II. Wesley's Orientation to the Church Fathers and His Inclination to the East

John Wesley's love for the early church fathers, as previously noted, began early in his life and never abated. As previously noted, one strand of his Anglican context with which Wesley resonated was the renewed appreciation of early Christian theology and practice. Anglican theologians of Wesley's era "called for a recovery of the faith and practice of the first four centuries of the Christian church… In the process…they reintroduced an awareness of many early theologians—particularly Greek writers—who had been lost from Western Christian consciousness."65 "Wesley readily adopted this esteem for "primitive" (i.e., pristine!) Christian theology and practice. Moreover, this was hardly a casual attitude of respect. He devoted considerable attention to the scholarship that was being produced by the Anglican patristics renaissance."66

Rediscoveries of ancient texts during the late medieval and Renaissance era, coupled with the invention of the printing press, led to a quantitative and qualitative increase in scholarship of all kinds. New editions of primitive church writings became widely available in their original Latin and Greek versions. Though there was interest in patristic scholarship on the Continent, study of the fathers thrived in England. Thomas Cranmer, John Jewel (1522-71), John

66 Randy L. Maddox, "Reading Wesley as a Theologian," *WTJ*, 30, 1, Spring 1995, 14 [7-54]. "...there was in the High Church Anglicanism of Wesley's day an extension of the definition of "primitive Christianity" to include the church of antiquity up through the fourth century. (This usage) represent(s) an appeal to primitive Christianity as a perceived "golden age" of the church, an early time when the church was free from the human accretions which distorted in various ways its doctrine and practice. For Wesley primitive Christianity typically includes the NT era through the third century..." Kelly D. Carter, "The High Church Roots of John Wesley's Appeal to Primitive Christianity," *Restoration Quarterly*, 37, 2, 1995, 65 [65-79].
Whitgift (1530-1604) and Richard Hooker (1554-1600) all made extensive use of a broad range of patristic texts.\textsuperscript{67}

Wesley not only became aware of many of the Greek patristic authors as a result, "he imbibed a marked preference for them over the Latin writers."\textsuperscript{68}

As the first chapter noted, in his \textit{Address to the Clergy} in 1756, Wesley is effusive in his recommendation of the Fathers.

Can any who spend several years in those seats of learning, be excused, if they do not add to that of the languages and sciences, the knowledge of the Fathers? the most authentic commentators on Scripture, as being both nearest the fountain, and eminently endued with that Spirit by whom all Scripture was given. It will be easily perceived, I speak chiefly of those who wrote before the Council of Nice. But who would not likewise desire to have some acquaintance with those that followed them? With St. Chrysostom, Basil, Jerome, Austin; and, above all, the man of a broken heart, Ephraim Syrus?\textsuperscript{69}

At the same time, Wesley makes it clear on several occasions in his sermons that the pristine era of Church history preceded the time of Constantine. While discussing the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, Wesley lays out his criticism of Constantine.

It does not appear that these extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were common in the Church for more than two or three centuries. We seldom hear of them after that \textit{fatal} [emphasis mine] period when the Emperor Constantine called himself a Christian; and, from a vain imagination of promoting the


\textsuperscript{68} Maddox, \textit{Reading Wesley}, 15. John Wesley was raised in a home where at the very least, his mother was sympathetic to the Nonjurors or High Churchmen. According to Henry Rack, these clergy stressed, "in varying degrees…a special reverence for the teaching and practice of the 'primitive' church of the first five centuries." See Henry D. Rack, \textit{Reasonable Enthusiast}, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992, 26). Further, according to Rack, "High Church views…were strongly marked in the early career of John Wesley as they were in his father and brothers…. Wesley's original pursuit of 'primitive Christianity' was very much in the High Church and indeed Nonjuror mode" (Ibid). Indeed, the Non-jurors "formed in effect a separate Anglican church that continued into the nineteenth century. They ultimately were led to engage in correspondence with the Eastern Orthodox churches in the hope of establishing communion with them... In 1763, John Wesley, failing to find any Anglican bishop willing to ordain Methodist preachers, won the agreement of the exiled Greek bishop of Arcadia...to do so." See David J. Melling, "British Isles," \textit{The Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity}, (Eds.) Ken Parry, David J. Melling, Dimitri Brady, Sidney H. Griffith and John F. Healey, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2001), 89; "While at Oxford, (Wesley) came under the influence of a peculiar group of Nonjurors who stressed the authority of the so-called \textit{Apostolic Canons} and \textit{Constitutions}, and pressed an unusual program of liturgical and disciplinary reform based on these." (Campbell, "Christian Tradition," 60).

\textsuperscript{69} Wesley, "An Address to the Clergy," \textit{Works}, Volume X, 484. See also, 492.
Christian cause thereby, heaped riches and power and honour upon the Christians in general, but in particular upon the Clergy.⁷₀

In his sermon Of Former Times, Wesley is even more exacting in his estimation of Constantine.

…I have been long convinced, from the whole tenor of ancient history that this very event, Constantine’s calling himself a Christian, and pouring that flood of wealth and honour on the Christian Church, the Clergy in particular, was productive of more evil to the Church than all the ten persecutions put together. From the time that power, riches, and honour of all kinds were heaped upon the Christians, vice of all kinds came in like a flood, both on the Clergy and laity. From the time that the Church and State, the kingdoms of Christ and of the world, were so strangely and unnaturally blended together, Christianity and Heathenism were so thoroughly incorporated with each other, that they will hardly ever be divided till Christ comes to reign upon earth.⁷¹

Apparently, for Wesley the dividing line of Constantine prompted his preference for the Ante-Nicene fathers.⁷² But Wesley is not always so precise in cutting off the age of purity with the rise of Constantine. In 1777, in his sermon "On Laying the Foundation of the New Chapel," Wesley addresses and answers the question "What is Methodism?", and in so doing reaffirms his appreciation and connection to specific Church Fathers.

Methodism, so called, is the old religion, the religion of the Bible, the religion of the primitive Church, the religion of the Church of England…. This is the religion of the primitive Church, of the whole Church in the purest ages. It is clearly expressed, even in the small remains of Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, and Polycarp; it is seen more at large in the writings of Tertullian, Origen, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Cyprian; and, even in the fourth century, it was found in the works of Chrysostom, Basil, Ephrem Syrus, and Macarius. It would be easy to produce "a cloud of witnesses," testifying the same thing were not this a point which no one will contest who has the least acquaintance with Christian antiquity.⁷³

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⁷¹ Ibid, 164. Wesley adds further words of condemnation in his sermon The Mystery of Iniquity, Works, Volume VI, 260-62.
⁷² Wesley, "Letter, Letter CCCCLXXXIII, Volume XII, 430.
This passage is particularly revealing in terms of Wesley’s perspective on ancient Christianity. Century divisions are clearly laid out, with the Apostolic Fathers (Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch and Polycarp of Smyrna) representing the second century, the quartet of Tertullian, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, and Cyprian representing the third century, and in the fourth century John Chrysostom, Basil the Great, bishop of Caesarea, Ephrem Syrus and Macarius “the Egyptian.” “Wesley’s evaluative traditioning is clearly present here. With the exception of Clement of Rome and the third-century quartet of Africans, the entire list is composed of Christians from the eastern Mediterranean.” 74 Although Campbell overstates the case, in that prior to the fourth century there were no significant "Eastern" voices; his main point is clear when one recognizes that by the fourth century there were clearly strong voices from both the East and the West, yet Wesley fails to mention any of the Western writers, including Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustine, but is content to list only fourth century Eastern writers. So much so, that Maddox suggests that although "it is generally recognized that the first four centuries of Christian tradition played a significant role in Wesley's theology, (w)hat is not as often noted is that he tended to value the Greek representatives over the Latin." 75 "The eastern branch of early Christianity exercised the lion's share of influence on Wesley, particularly in the areas which gave his theology its distinctive character. His Pneumatology was greatly affected by the East…and it contributed to his understanding of perfection…” 76

Wesley drew from the well of Eastern spirituality in his readings of the Eastern fathers' spiritual texts; in fact, he preferred the Eastern teachers over the Westerners. These included Athanasius, Basil, John Chrysostom, Clement of

74 Ted A. Campbell, “Wesley’s Use of the Church Fathers,” 60.
75 Maddox, "John Wesley and Eastern Orthodoxy," 30. In the same article, Maddox is even stronger when he writes, "Even a cursory reading of Wesley shows that (the) recovered Greek theological voices were important to him" (Ibid.).
Although Wesley was at times critical of some of the Church Fathers, nevertheless he continued to study and refer to ancient Christian writings. According to Campbell, over one-hundred-fifty references to early Christian works can be found in Wesley’s writings. He explicitly held up the writings of the ancient Church as a template, subordinate only to scripture, for Christian teaching. In 1748, in a letter to The Reverend Dr. Conyers Middleton, Wesley argued that even though the Scriptures are a complete rule of faith and practice and clear at all necessary points, still "the esteeming (of) the writings of the first three centuries, not equally with, but next to, the Scriptures, never carried any man yet into dangerous errors, nor probably ever will." In the thought and piety of the early Church, he discovered what he thereafter regarded as the normative pattern of catholic Christianity. According to Wainwright, Wesley "often supported his own exegesis of the Scriptures by appeal to patristic interpretations of the biblical passages."

In his "Preface to the Epistles of the Apostolic Fathers," written in 1749, that included the writings of Clement, Ignatius and Polycarp, Wesley reminds his readers that the writings of these men are comparable to, although not as authoritative; as the writings of the New Testament.

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77 Kärkkäinen, 74.
78 Campbell, 41. By Campbell's reckoning, Wesley referenced, among others, Augustine, Athanasius, Basil, Chrysostom, Clement of Alexandria, Ephraem Syrus, Gregory of Nazianzen, Macarius and Origen.
80 Outler, John Wesley, 9.
…we cannot with any reason doubt of what they deliver to us as the Gospel of Christ; but ought to receive it, though not with equal veneration, yet with only little less regard than we do the sacred writings of those who were their masters and instructors.

Yet farther: They were not only such eminent men, but they were also persons of consummate piety; adorned with all those Christian virtues which they so affectionately recommend to us. But especially they were watchmen over their churches, careful to instruct them in the true faith of Christ, and to preserve them from the contagion of those heresies which even then began to corrupt it…. Such reason have we to look on the writings of these holy men, as containing the pure, uncorrupted doctrine of Christ...

The plain inference is, not only that they were not mistaken in their interpretations of the Gospel of Christ but that in all the necessary parts of it, they were so assisted by the Holy Ghost, as to be scarce capable of mistaking. Consequently, we are to look on their writings, though not of equal authority with the holy Scriptures, …yet as worthy of a much greater respect than any composures which have been made since; however men have afterwards written with more art, and a greater stock of human learning, than is to be found not only in the following pieces, but even in the New Testament itself.  

Wesley also demonstrated, at the very least neutrality and at the most, positive sympathy with a number of persons and groups of early church history who were opposed and criticized by Augustine. Wesley's affirmation of such was based on their ostensible spiritual and ethical seriousness. As a result, he had positive things to say about the Montanists, referring to them as "real, scriptural Christians," and the Donatists, of whom he wrote, "What the Donatists were, I do not know; but I suspect they were the real Christians of that age; and were therefore served by St. Augustine and his warm adherents, as the Methodists are now by their zealous adversaries." Even of Pelagius, Wesley asked and answered, "Who was Pelagius? By all I can

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pick up from ancient authors, I guess he was both a wise and holy man. But we know nothing but his name; for his writings are all destroyed; not one line of them left."\(^{85}\)

It is clear that Wesley wanted to restore the nature and characteristics of the primitive church, including its teachings, practices, worship, and to some extent, its order. Wesley sought consciously and continually to recover what he saw as the pristine purity of primitive Christianity.

According to Baker,

Wesley continued to follow a system of checks whenever he thought to venture on ecclesiastical experiments of doubtful orthodoxy. One test was to find Scripture that approved his conduct—or at least to be assured that no Scripture condemned it. Another was to see if it was in tune with the spirit (and better still the letter) of practice in the primitive church…. If it passed all these tests, he would try it.\(^{86}\)

In his "Letter to a Roman Catholic," after summarizing the essence of the Christian faith, Wesley clearly articulates his patristic vision when he writes, "This, and this alone, is the old religion. This is true, primitive Christianity. O when shall it spread over all the earth! When shall it be found both in us and you? Without waiting for others, let each of us, by the grace of God, amend one."\(^{87}\)

According to Schmidt,

To his mind, the pristine Christianity of the apostles supplied man's every need. All his zeal was devoted to this. He was utterly convinced that primitive Christianity could be restored in his own day and age, as in every generation… For him, what was at stake was the purity of the Gospel and its being appropriated by men. This concern for truth did not prevent him from showing respect for the Church as an institution at every opportunity, from loving its liturgy, from reviving its rule on fasting or from readily acknowledging the markedly Patristic features in its own self-understanding. All this, however, was not an end in itself, but a means to an end. Restoration of the primitive Christian

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\(^{85}\) Wesley, "Letter CCVI—To Mr. Alexander Coates," *Works*, Volume XII, 240.

\(^{86}\) Baker, 139.

stance in its totality was always his guiding principle; never for a single moment did he diverge from this.

Even in the last decade of his life, Wesley demonstrates his consistency in his appeal and appreciation of the primitive church. In a "Letter to Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our Brethren in North America" this consistency is apparent.

As our American brethren are now totally disentangled both from the State, and from the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again, either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty, simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free.

Although this chapter has already suggested a strong link between Wesley and the Eastern branch of the Church Fathers, in order to begin to appreciate the influence this branch of Christianity had on Wesley, a more specific focus is still necessary, which includes some general differences in theological perspective and persuasion between the East and West.

Meyendorff, while underlining the fact that the entire tradition of the Christian East has attributed to the saints and spiritual leaders of history "a certain particular authority in preserving the truth and guiding the Christian community," concludes that this very aspect of the Eastern tradition attracted "the attention and admiration of John Wesley, who even translated the writings attributed to Macarius of Egypt into English."

88 Schmidt, 191-2; "He went back to earlier times, and took for his model in doctrine and worship the Primitive Church before its divisions into East and West." Charles J. Abbey and John H. Overton, The English Church in the Eighteenth Century, (London, UK: Longmans, Green and Co., 1878), 68.
89 Wesley, "Letter to Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and Our Brethren in North America," Works, Volume XIII, 252.
90 This focus will be an overview, suggesting broad convergences between Wesley and selected Eastern Fathers, recognizing that a more detailed examination will occur in chapters four, five and six of this work.
92 Ibid. Frederick Hunter, in his book John Wesley and the Coming Comprehensive Church, (London, UK: The Epworth Press, 1968), 32 suggests, "Wesley retained more affinities with the East until the end of his life, than he effectively transmitted to Methodism, but he was never more sympathetic than in the years 1733-6. In 1734, he read 'Confessio Ecclesiae Orientalis', a Confession of the Eastern Orthodox church. He would know of the acceptance by that Church of eight-five Apostolic Canons, fifty of which had originally been accepted by Rome."
The importance of this influence of Macarius on Wesley (and other writings from the Early church, especially the Eastern fathers) seems more significant than is often recognized. In the face of the rather grim determinism of the Calvinistically oriented Protestant scholasticism of his day (particularly seen in the ideas of a limited atonement, a rigid predestinarianism, a total depravity which precluded a Christian ever overcoming sin in his life, and an emphasis on justification by faith alone which seemed to deny the necessity of good works, thus leading to antinomianism), Wesley found in these writings a clear call to real, pure holiness of Christian living, attainable in this life through active cooperation with God's grace, and available to all.  

Greek writing theologians tended toward a different understanding of the relation of creation, sin, and salvation than that which became the dominant understanding in the Western theologians. Comparatively, the soteriology of Western Christianity has been characterized by a penal focus on guilt and forgiveness, while the early Greek Christian soteriology more typically emphasized the therapeutic concern for healing our sin and our diseased nature.

...one begins to understand the theological differences between East and West by considering the theological anthropologies of each, most especially the way in which each correlates the doctrines of incarnation and redemption. The East, on the one hand, with its basic interest in sanctification, has understood humankind to be basically corrupt and in desperate need of healing. The incarnation is understood to be a recapitulation of humankind, which makes possible our participation in God, our true and absolute healing. The West, on the other hand, with its fixation on justification, has understood humankind as absolutely powerless to atone for itself. The incarnation is understood in light of the Cross, which juridically pardons one of guilt.... An understanding of the incarnation which rises from some need to satisfy God’s justice (Anselm) would seem to slight the possibility of that kind of participation in the divine nature which enables us to become “like” God. Viewing the death of Christ primarily in terms of the pardon of humankind tends to make redemption essentially forensic. An understanding of the incarnation, which is based in the conviction that God became what we are in order to reveal what we might become, to the glory of God, looks to the Cross as therapeutic. Redemption is a recapitulative work, as we become like him who has become like us. The eastern tradition maintains that theosis, the “way” into this deifying union or

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94 Maddox, “Reading Wesley as a Theologian,” eight.

95 “Theosis in the Eastern Orthodox tradition is a vision of human potential for perfection, anticipated in ancient Greece, witnessed to in both the Old and New Testaments, and developed by Patristic Christian theologians of the first five centuries after Christ. This vision survived the fourth-century purges of heresy and persists yet today in
restoration of the *imago dei*, comes by way of the mysterious coinciding of a gift of divine energy and human freedom. This transforming union with God is not the result of an organic or unconscious process: it is accomplished in persons by the cooperation of the Holy Spirit and our freedom.\(^\text{96}\)

Orthodox theologian Charles Ashanin has pointed out that the classical Methodist doctrine of sanctification “is probably Wesley’s adaptation of the Patristic doctrine of Theosis…”\(^\text{97}\)

Maddox, while discussing Wesley’s understanding of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, concurs.

> When we respond to the pardoning love of God offered in Christ, we experience a deepened participation of the Divine Presence in our lives through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. As we continue to respond within this deepening participation we are progressively empowered and guided in transforming our sin-warped nature (i.e., sanctification).

For Wesley, then, the Spirit’s work of sanctification was not merely a forensic declaration of how God will treat us…. Neither was it a matter of directly infusing virtues in Christian lives. It was a process of character-formation that is made possible by a restored participation of fallen humanity in the Divine life and power. This understanding of sanctification has significant parallels with the Eastern Orthodox theme of deification (*theosis*)…\(^\text{98}\)

Several of these differences or emphases in anthropology, soteriology and sanctification would ultimately play a major role in the formation of Wesley's theology. Kärkkäinen draws a close connection between the Eastern Fathers and Wesley.

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97 Charles Ashanin, *Essays on Orthodox Christianity and Church History*, (Indianapolis, IN: Broad Ripple, 1990), 90. Ashanin's use of the word "doctrine" suggests an organized or systematic theology of theosis. However, in the writings of the Eastern Fathers, there is no overarching and summarizing doctrine of theosis. There are indeed similar components among the Fathers' understandings of deification, but each of these are nuanced to their particular situation and ethos. This does not dismantle the idea of theosis since it is so widespread, but cautions one in looking for a consistent and detailed description among the Fathers.

Themes such as the goal of the Christian life as perfected love, the role of the Holy Spirit in the entire sanctification of the Christian life and the emphasis on Christian virtue resonate directly with Eastern Orthodox emphases. They are indications of the general orientation of the Wesleyan doctrine of salvation; not the "pardoning" but "participation" is the key to the Christian life and salvation, in other words, union with God in perfect love and holiness. Thus, Wesley urges a divine-human communion, a coinciding communion which extends far beyond the moment of conversion. 99

Wesley's vision of the goal of sanctification, Christian perfection, appears—in the eyes of many contemporary readers—to have clear precedents in other ancient ascetic literature. Wesley consistently taught that the process of sanctification culminated in entire sanctification or Christian perfection, which he understood to mean the goal of loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. As a result, Wesley found deep value in Clement of Alexandria’s description of the Christian ideal. In 1739, John and Charles Wesley published a seven stanza poem called “On Clemens Alexandrinus’s Description of a Perfect Christian,” and included it in their Hymns and Sacred Poems. The poem is likely not actually written by the Wesleys but by a friend, John Gambold. The fact that John Wesley published the text in Hymns and Sacred Poems indicates his agreement with its content and his appreciation for Clement. This early poem calls upon Clement's description of the goal of Christian perfection. It begins with the stanza:

Here from afar the finish'd Height  
Of Holiness is seen:  
But O what heavy tracts of Toil,  
What Deserts lie between. 100

99 Kärkkäinen, One with God, 73.  
100 David Bundy, "Christian Virtue: John Wesley and the Alexandrian Tradition," WTJ, 26, 1, 1991, 41; see also Campbell, Wesley's Use of the Church Fathers, 66.
According to David Bundy, “the contents of the poem reflect an awareness of Clement’s Stromata 4, as well as of Stromata 7 ‘On Perfection.”

Wesley's connection to Clement was strengthened in 1767, when Wesley acknowledged in his journal entry for Thursday, March 5, that his tract called “Character of a Methodist” (published in 1742) was based on Clement’s work. In that entry, Wesley commented,

"Five or six and thirty years ago, I much admired the character of a perfect Christian drawn by Clemens Alexandrinus. Five or six and twenty years ago, a thought came into my mind, of drawing such a character myself, only in a more scriptural manner, and mostly in the very words of Scripture: This I entitled, 'The Character of a Methodist','...

What I say, after having given a scriptural account of a perfect Christian, is this:-'By these marks the Methodists desire to be distinguished from other men: By these we labour to distinguish ourselves.'

Even a cursory comparison of Clement's *Stromata*, Book VII and Wesley's *Character of a Methodist*, suggests at the very least, certain common elements or emphases. Although the order of declaration is different in Wesley than in Clement, nevertheless, both are consistent in their emphasis on perfection, the "pure in heart," love for one's neighbours, victory over passions leading to forgiveness and lack of revenge, unceasing prayer, and holiness

102 John Wesley, "Journal from May 6, 1760 to September 12, 1773, On Ash-Wednesday, March 4, 1767," *Works*, III, 272-3. Wesley seems concerned to emphasize the "Scriptural" bases for his work, perhaps in contradistinction to what he may have considered the highly philosophical approach of Clement. At the same time, one wonders if Wesley was overstating the case in that Clement's work is infused with Scriptural references and allusions.
103 This should not be surprising considered that "The *Stromata* are written carelessly, and even confusedly..." and Wesley prided himself in order and method ("Methodists")."Clement's principal work is the seven books of the *Stromata*...it is a difficult and enigmatic work...the *Stromata* are anything but a systematic explanation." See Johannes Hofmann, "Clement of Alexandria," (Eds.) Siegmar Düpp and Wilhelm Geerlings, *Dictionary of Early Christian Literature*, (New York, NY: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2000), 131.
of life and obedience to God. Although the former elements are classified and described separately, they fit concisely into Wesley's rubric of character or holy living, which is subsumed under his understanding of sanctification. In Clement's *The Instructor*, he speaks to similar subjects, identifying his work as "the guide to piety...to heal the passions...to improve the soul...to the attainment of right dispositions and character," so that Christ will "perfect us by a graduation conducive to salvation." Further, when one compares Books IV and VI of Clements *Stromata* with Wesley's "Character of a Methodist," the parallels are striking. Both speak of the love of God fueling the Christian in a journey to perfection, of striving after the image and likeness of the Lord, of the holiness or sanctification of the body and soul, of perfection that is marked by the lack of anger, envy, resentment or revenge, love for God and love for all others.

In addition to Clement, Wesley also heard in Origen a compelling Christian message of the promise and possibility of perfection. The goal of the Christian life, according to Origen, is to see God face to face, and in so doing, to be deified. The means to deification is participation in divinity: that is, contemplation of God in the mirror of the soul which

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115 Clement of Alexandria is cited at least five times by Wesley, while Origen is cited some twenty-five times, as noted in the *Works* of Wesley, as recorded in the Third edition and the BCE. This was further corroborated in part through the CD-ROM edition of *The Works of John Wesley*, BCE) published by Abingdon Press. Wesley is however, at times, extremely frustrating in his comments related to Christian antiquity. For example, in a letter to Mr. Richard Tompsson on July 25, 1755, Wesley—although appropriating support from the writings of Origen—also suggests that "we have few points of doctrine explicitly taught in the small remains of the ante-Nicene Fathers." See Wesley, "Letters to Mr. Richard Tompsson," *Works*, XII, 468.
increasingly appropriates divine being. Therefore, “…nourished by God the Word, who was in the beginning with God (cf. Jn. 1:1), we may be made divine.”\textsuperscript{116}

Human deification is possible, according to Origen, because of God’s humanization in Christ. In the descent of divinity into the body of humanity, “there began the union of the divine with the human nature, in order that the human, by communion with the divine, might rise to be divine…”\textsuperscript{117} Still, Wesley is cautious in his appropriation of Origen. For Wesley, unlike Origen, the sanctified believer does not become divine in nature, but rather is perfected in love and goodwill. Theosis in Wesley (although he never actually used the word "theosis") is not an esoteric experience in which the soul returns perfected to God, but rather, is a practical experience that focuses on what Wesley viewed as possible in this life. In his homily "On Perfection," written in 1784, Wesley clearly and passionately articulates the present tense reality of perfection.

The highest perfection which man can attain, while the soul dwells in the body, does not exclude ignorance, and error, and a thousand other infirmities…. What is then the perfection of which man is capable while he dwells in a corruptible body? It is the complying with that kind command, "My son, give me that heart." It is the "loving the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind." This is the sum of Christian perfection: It is all comprised in that one word, Love. The first branch of it is the love of God… it is inseparably connected with the second: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."… These contain the whole of Christian perfection…. Perfection is another name for universal holiness: Inward and outward righteousness: Holiness of life, arising from holiness of heart.\textsuperscript{118}

In 1740, much earlier in his ministry, Wesley wrote "The Principles of a Methodist," in part to address criticism attached to his teaching on perfection. His response demonstrates the


consistent emphasis Wesley placed on perfection that was lived out in everyday life. He
describes, not so much what perfection is, as who is the person who can be called perfect.

We mean one in whom 'is the mind which was in Christ,' and who so 'walketh
as Christ walked;' a 'man that hath clean hands and a pure heart,' or that is
'cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit;' one in whom 'is no occasion of
stumbling, and who accordingly 'doth not commit sin.'... We understand hereby
one whom God hath 'sanctified throughout, in body, soul, and spirit;' one who
'walketh in the light as he is in the light, in whom is no darkness at all; the blood
of Jesus Christ his Son cleansed him from all sin.'..."This is to be 'a perfect
man,' to be sanctified throughout..."119

In substituting the eighteenth century concept of “Christian perfection” for that of Alexandrian
theosis, Wesley reconstructed his ancient sources.120

Before considering the connections and convergences between Wesley and Macarius, a
brief excursus into Wesley's views on the subject of perfection will be helpful and allow the
Macarian connections to be seen more clearly.

Wesley believed that the Holy Spirit was the main agent involved in Christian
experience and the result was that his “pneumatology was distinctly soteriological. The Spirit is
the Divine initiative who awakens, assures, purifies, and guides the believer in the ordo
salutis."121 For Wesley, justification and sanctification are inextricably bound together. His
understanding is that “...at the same time that we are justified, yea, in that very moment,
sanctification begins. In that instant we are born again, born from above, born of the Spirit.
This is both a real and a relative change. We are inwardly renewed by the power of God.”122 In
response to the question, "How do you know that you are sanctified, saved from your inbred
corruption,"

120 Christensen, "Theosis and Sanctification," 77.
122 John Wesley, “The Scripture Way of Salvation,” John Wesley’s Sermons, An Anthology, (Eds.), Albert C.
Wesley answered,

I can know it no otherwise than I know that I am justified. "hereby know we that we are of God," in either sense, "by the Spirit that he hath given us." We know it by the witness and by the fruit of the Spirit. And, First [sic] by the witness. As, when we were justified, the Spirit bore witness with our spirit, that our sins were forgiven; so, when we were sanctified, he bore witness, that they were taken away. Indeed, the witness of sanctification is not always clear at first; (as neither is that of justification;) neither is it afterward always the same, but, like that of justification, sometimes stronger and sometimes fainter. Yea, and sometimes it is withdrawn. Yet, in general, the latter testimony of the Spirit is both as clear and as steady as the former.123

Wesley was very careful and precise in his preaching on this subject.

Salvation is carried on by ‘convincing grace,’ usually in Scripture termed ‘repentance,’ … Afterwards, we experience the proper Christian salvation, consisting of those two grand branches, justification and sanctification. By justification we are saved from the guilt of sin, and restored to the favour of God: by sanctification we are saved from the power and root of sin, and restored to the image of God.124

Salvation according to Wesley was both instantaneous and progressive, which created tension in terms of his understanding of sanctification as the perfecting of the Christian. In his sermon, “On Working Out Our Own Salvation,” Wesley contends that the Scripture “shows this salvation to be both instantaneous and gradual. It begins the moment we are justified… It gradually increases from that moment… till in another instant the heart is cleansed from all sin, and filled with pure love to God and man.”125 In a letter to Joseph Benson on December 28, 1770, regarding the subject of sanctification and perfection, Wesley makes an important comment.

124 John Wesley, “On Working Out Our Own Salvation,” John Wesley's Sermons, 488. In his own theological metamorphosis, Wesley was convinced of the need to distinguish in some sense the new birth and sanctification—“the first being the rejuvenation of our human faculties that accompanies the restored pardoning Presence of God in our lives, while the second is the gradual renewal of our moral nature that is then possible (theosis). In other words, the New Birth is only the gate or beginning to sanctification proper.” Maddox, Responsible Grace, 159.
This I term sanctification, (which is both instantaneous and a gradual work,) or perfection, the being perfected in love, filled with love, which still admits of a thousand degrees… But…the whole thing is what I contend for; an entire deliverance from sin, a recovery of the whole image of God, the loving of God with all our heart, soul, and strength…

Yet as early as 1741 it was clear that Wesley sought to clarify his teaching on the subject of perfection.

Christian perfection, therefore, does not imply (as some men seem to have imagined) an exemption either from ignorance, or mistake, or infirmities, or temptations. Indeed, it is only another term for ‘holiness.’ They are two names for the same thing. Thus, every one that is perfect is holy, and every one that is holy is, in the Scripture sense, perfect. Yet we may, lastly, observe that neither in this respect is there any absolute perfection on earth…. So that how much soever any man has attained, or in how high a degree soever he is perfect, he hath still need to ‘grow in grace’ and daily to advance in the knowledge and love of God his Saviour.

There remains no doubt from a reading of Wesley’s sermons and letters that his teaching or emphases on the subject of sanctification and perfection evolved or matured over the course of his life. Wesley's early view insisted that perfection was for all Christians and that it was an instantaneous experience that verified the identity of the real Christian. Later in his life (as noted in chapter 5), he was less exacting in his expectations of the all-encompassing nature of perfection for Christians and allowed that the process of perfective sanctification was indeed one that a person grew into spiritually. At all stages of his life he taught that sanctification was the process of being renewed into the image of God, in true righteousness and holiness. Faith is the condition and instrument of sanctification. Wesley’s mature or developed idea of Christian perfection can be summarized by saying that he believed God’s loving grace can transform a Christian’s life to the point where their love for God and others becomes a “natural” response.

Wesley explained Christian perfection in the following words.

126 John Wesley, "Letter to Mr. Joseph Benson, Letter CCCCLVII, Works, Volume XII, 416.
In one view, it is purity of intention, dedicating all the life to God. It is the giving God all our heart; it is one desire and design ruling all our tempers. It is the devoting, not a part, but all our soul, body, and substance to God. In another view, it is all the mind which was in Christ, enabling us to walk as Christ walked... It is a renewal of the heart in the whole image of God [emphasis mine], the full likeness [emphasis mine] of Him that created it. In yet another, it is the loving God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves. Now, take it in which of these views you please, (for there is no material difference,) and this is the whole and sole perfection, as a train of writings prove to a demonstration, which I have believed and taught for these forty years, from the year 1725 to the year 1765.128

Although Wesley certainly ignored some of Origen’s theological concepts, in that Wesley would not agree with Origen's doctrine of the soul, nor his insistence on universal salvation and recapitulation, Wesley's alignment with Macarius was much closer. As noted earlier, it was Albert C. Outler, professor of historical theology at Southern Methodist University and a leading Methodist ecumenist who suggested in 1964 that John Wesley’s doctrine of sanctification might have roots in the work of Gregory of Nyssa and the Cappadocian writers of the fourth century by way of the so-called “Macarian” Homilies.129 Some thirty years earlier, although in no way affirming the Macarius/Nyssa connection, Flew underscored the influence of Macarius on Wesley.

He read the Homilies of Macarius the Egyptian in Georgia. He published an extract from the Homilies in the first volume of the Christian Library. He quotes Macarius in the Sermon which more than any other may be regarded as the epitome of the message the Evangelical Revival.130 These facts are overwhelming proof of his debt, whether avowed or unconscious, to the mystical tradition of the past.131

It is also clear that Wesley made his own much of the theology of Macarius’ “Fifty Homilies.” Wesley knew them as “The Fifty Spiritual Homilies” and he attributed them to

129 Outler, Wesley, 9, especially footnote 16.
Macarius the Great of Egypt, one of the most revered of the desert fathers of the early church. Wesley read the homilies in 1735 and included twenty-two of them in the first volume of his *Christian Library*. The English translation of the Macarian Homilies, which Wesley used, understood the significance of the work to be its contribution to Christian sanctification and morality. The preface makes clear what Wesley took to be its main message:

What [Macarius] continually labors to cultivate in himself and others is, the real life of GOD in the heart and soul, that kingdom of GOD, which consists in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. He is ever quickening and stirring up his audience, endeavoring to kindle in them a steady zeal, an earnest desire, and inflamed ambition, to recover that *Divine image* [emphasis mine] we were made in; to be made conformable to CHRIST our head; to be daily sensible more and more of our living union with Him as such; and discovering it, as occasion requires, in all the genuine fruits of an holy life and conversation, in such a victorious faith as overcomes the world, and working by love, is ever fulfilling the whole law of GOD. He seems indeed never to be easy, but either in the height, or breadth, or length of divine love, or at least in the depths of humility.

In my opinion, Wesley was, at least in part, attracted to the work of Macarius because "He offers….descriptions of spiritual experiences, and practical instructions that are utterances of the moment and follow no system, and yet as a whole seek to point the way to perfection."

As noted, Wesley saw perfection ultimately as perfect love for God. It is not coincidental that the same language appears in the *Homilies*.

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Many of the brethren have come to such measures, and had gifts of healing, and revelation and prophecy, and because they did not reach the perfect love, wherein lies the bond of perfectness, war came upon them, and they took no heed, and fell. But if anyone reaches the perfect love, that man is from thenceforth fast bound, and is the captive of grace.\footnote{A. J. Mason, \textit{Fifty Spiritual Homilies of St. Macarius the Egyptian}, (New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1921), "Homily XXVI," 193.}

Both Wesley and Macarius identify struggle as a key ingredient in reaching perfection, although perfection comes entirely through the grace of God and the gift of the Spirit. In the \textit{Homilies}

\begin{quote}
...Christians, though outwardly they are tempted; yet inwardly they are filled with the Divine nature, and so nothing injured. These degrees, if any man attain to, he is come to the perfect love of CHRIST, and to the fullness of the Godhead. But he that is not so, still inwardly retains the war. He is one hour refreshed in prayer, and another in a state of affliction: for so is the will of the Lord; because he is as yet but an infant, he trains him up to the battle: and there spring up in him both light and darkness, and rest, and affliction and that, whatever gifts he has, for many of the brethren have had the gifts of healing, and revelation and prophecy; however, not having attained to perfect charity, the war came upon them and they fell.\footnote{John Wesley, (Ed.), "The Homilies of Macarius," Homily 14, section 5, \textit{A Christian Library}, 16.}
\end{quote}

The Macarian homilies helped to substantiate for Wesley, the vital truth that sin remains in the Christian, and that the carnal nature still plagues a child of God. For example, in his sermon "The Scripture Way of Salvation," Wesley asks,

\begin{quote}
How exactly did Macarius, fourteen hundred years ago, describe the present experience of the children of God? "The unskillful," or unexperienced, "when grace operates, presently imagine they have no more sin. Whereas they that have discretion cannot deny, that even we who have the grace of God may be molested again.—For we have often had instances of some among the brethren, who have experienced such grace as to affirm that they had no sin in them; and yet, after all, when they thought themselves entirely freed from it, the corruption that lurked within was stirred up anew, and they were well-nigh burned up."
\end{quote}

Frances Young's chapter on some parallels between Wesley and Greek Fathers, offers a concise, yet excellent accounting the Wesley/Macarian convergences. It is Young's opinion

\begin{quote}
\footnote{John Wesley, "Sermon XLIII, The Scripture Way of Salvation," \textit{Works}, Volume VI, 45-6.}
\end{quote}
that in Wesley's reading of Macarius, he found that "perfection is perfect love, and in the true Christian this is anticipated on earth; but it is never secure, and the discipline of temptation is always possible. This struggle towards perfection is at the heart of prayer and spirituality."\(^{138}\) She further concludes that "Wesley and "Macarius" have…a common drive towards perfection as the goal of the Christian life, a common emphasis on the Incarnation and the Holy Spirit as the generators of perfection, a common stress on the love of God."\(^{139}\) For Wesley and Macarius, grace is the Holy Spirit at work in our life, initiating and sustaining our recovery of Christ-likeness.\(^{140}\)

The *Homilies* of Macarius stressed the goal of Christian perfection or deification (theosis). It should be noted that Wesley eliminated the term "theosis" from his edition of the Homilies, replacing it typically with "sanctification." The Homilies speak of a "Sanctification of the Spirit" which can be termed "an Entire Redemption from Sin," or "the Baptism of Fire and of the Holy Ghost,"\(^{141}\) all of which merge well with Wesley's insistence that the Christian pursue holiness and perfection in this life.

As demonstrated in the earlier excursus on Wesley's thoughts on sanctification and perfection, for Wesley there exists a synergism between the grace of God and human effort in the journey to perfection. The same emphasis is seen in the *Homilies* of Macarius.

Grace, indeed, is unceasingly present and is rooted in us and mingled with our nature from our earliest years. It is as something natural and real which adheres to a person in various ways, depending on one's cooperation as far as this is given…


\(^{139}\) Ibid, 164.


…If one does not strive to be good. Does not possess the virtues already mentioned [goodness, simplicity, kindness, humility, charity, and prayer] and has not even prepared himself for them, he loses the grace which he has acquired and falls…

…Grace is not extinguished or diminished, but so that your free will and liberty may be put to the test to see which way it tends, grace permits the presence of sin…. You see that it is up to your will and freedom of choice to honor the Holy Spirit and not to grieve him. I guarantee you that free choice remains.142

Wesley's focus on the spiritual development or growth in the Christian life is most visible in his doctrine of sanctification, and in this point, his doctrine of sanctification was congruent with that of the Eastern Fathers. "Wesley knew the importance of holiness of life for the Christian, and from the Eastern patristic tradition, especially from the Macarian Homilies, he learned the idea of sanctification or perfection as a process, and not a goal at which one arrives all at once."143

Despite the fact that Wesley inadvertently attached the wrong author to the Homilies,

What matters most in connection with Wesley is that in the writings of what he thought was “Macarius the Egyptian,” he was actually in touch with Gregory of Nyssa, the greatest of all the Eastern Christian teachers of the quest for perfection. Thus, in his early days, he drank deep of this Byzantine tradition of spirituality at its source and assimilated its conception of devotion as the way and perfection as the goal of the Christian life.144

Wesley appears to be in close agreement with Macarius in such concepts as 1) the Christian life as a continuing conscious experience of the presence of God; 2) the dynamic of Christian growth in perfection; 3) the continual need to be striving against all sin and for virtues, especially humility, repentance, good works, and abandonment of self-will to God; 4) Christian

144 Outler, Wesley, 9. Louis Bouyer suggests a threefold posterity might be attributed to Gregory of Nyssa. One line of that posterity includes the notion that Nyssa's "thought was methodically popularized. In the body of the writings attributed to Macarius, the substance of Gregory's spiritual thought was made available to the least cultivated minds." See Louis Bouyer, The Spirituality of the new Testament and the Fathers, (London, UK: Burns & Oates Limited, 1963), 369.
perfection as the recovery of the image of God in man (theosis); 5) the limitations on this perfection while in this life are due to our existence in a sinful world, 6) the possibility of falling away from grace and true holiness, and 7) the description of the Christian life as one of constant spiritual battle.\textsuperscript{145}

The ancient Christian writers who influenced Wesley most strongly—for example the author of the Macarian homilies—did not believe that deep attitudes of heart appeared automatically. Love, and the integration that comes with it, comes a little at a time through a long process of practice, prayer, training, and, especially, God's grace. They stressed that nobody can expect to love God or neighbor very much in the beginning of the Christian life—and the beginning of the Christian life can last years! Ever the realists, they admitted that we are typically governed by too many destructive emotions, states of mind, and habits to be able even to see others, let alone love them. Ambition, envy, resentment, depression, a love of power, and anxiety (among other things!), govern our lives and prevent us from doing much loving.

Wesley and the ancient writers would declare that if we expect we ought to be simple, loving people with uncomplex relationships to God and each other right now, it is no wonder we feel like failures! We have had unrealistic expectations in the first place, expectations connected with our misunderstanding of the whole point of the Christian life.\textsuperscript{146}

Notwithstanding the apparent, but not conclusive link between Wesley, Macarius and Gregory of Nyassa, Howard Snyder, in slightly different nomenclature, lists several key themes which occur in Macarius and Gregory of Nyssa that significantly correspond with Wesley’s theology.

1) Salvation and sanctification are seen fundamentally in terms of the restoration of the image of God; 2) Human beings have free will, the capacity for choosing the good and changing toward that which is perfect; 3) Perfection is participation in the divine Spirit; 4) Love is the supreme virtue in perfection; 5) The Christian must strive to attain perfection; 6) Christ is the Christian’s model—the one to be imitated—in this process of perfection.\textsuperscript{147}

\textsuperscript{145} Ford, 288, note 9.

\textsuperscript{146} Roberta C. Bondi, "Aldersgate and Patterns of Methodist Spirituality," (Ed.), Randy L. Maddox, \textit{Aldersgate Reconsidered}, 25.

\textsuperscript{147} Howard A. Snyder, “John Wesley and Macarius the Egyptian,” \textit{ATJ}, 45, 2, (1990), 56-7. I will return to Gregory of Nyssa later in this thesis.
It would be fair to conclude that Wesley was remarkable among western Christian theologians in understanding that the goal of the Christian’s life (Christian perfection, renewal of the *imago dei*) is inseparably linked to the way of life (faith filled with the energy of love, divine/human participation, *theosis*).\(^{148}\)

If Clement of Alexandria serves as the first stone in Wesley’s theological formation and foundation, at least in terms of his articulation of sanctification/perfection, “from Clement we may trace a line of development which forms that tradition in Eastern spirituality with which Wesley “communicated” in the evolving of his doctrine of perfection.”\(^{149}\)

This then would explain why Wesley in his affinity for "Macarius" would also be attracted to Clement of Alexandria. For, in a way, Wesley was really in "dialogue" with an Eastern tradition of spirituality that has lines of continuity from Clement of Alexandria and Origen through Basil the Great to Gregory of Nyssa.\(^ {150}\)

Wesley also spoke highly of Saint Ephrem the Syrian, who is fondly referred to as "the man of a broken and contrite heart."\(^{151}\) Given his geographical predisposition of living in Syria, in some measure, Ephrem might not be counted among the Eastern Fathers. However, Sebastian Brock argues convincingly that one must consider the writings under the umbrella of the East. After delineating the differences between the Greek and Semitic presentations of religion, Brock cautions that "we should not go on to make the mistake of supposing that there is some sharp divide between the Semitic presentation of Christianity and that of Ephrem's contemporaries who wrote in Greek or Latin."\(^{152}\)

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\(^{148}\) McCormick, *Theosis*, 47.


\(^{150}\) Ibid.

\(^{151}\) Wesley, "Journal from October 27, 1743, to November 17, 1746, March 4, Volume 2, 48.

...anyone who has read both Ephrem and any of the great fourth-century Greek Christian writers cannot fail to have sensed...how very close, at a profounder level, Ephrem...is to his Greek contemporaries. What separates them is, not so much a basically different understanding of the central doctrines of Christianity, but rather their very different mode of presenting these doctrines.  

Given this "Eastern" connection with Ephrem, it is appropriate to briefly explore Wesley's affinity for Ephrem. There is a difference of opinion as to when Wesley first read Ephrem, but it is with certainty that he read Ephrem in Georgia in 1736. Curnock, in his notes on Wesley's "Fourth Savannah Journal," identifies September 19, 1736 as the first Sunday on which Wesley read Ephrem in preparation for preaching. In notes for October 10 of the same year, Curnock adds, "The reading of Ephraem Syrus was his preparation for preaching, and at intervals through the day he returned to the same writer, of whom he thought highly." Despite an apparent affection for Ephrem in terms of sermon preparation, it is nevertheless difficult to determine which of Ephrem's writings Wesley studied, for his next reference to Ephrem, in his description of the religious situation in Frederica, Georgia, in his journal entry for Tuesday, October 12, 1736, is oblique.

I was at first a little discouraged, but soon remembered the word which cannot fail: "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." I cried to God to "arise and maintain his own cause;" and after the evening prayers were ended, invited a few to my house; as I did every night while I stayed at Frederica. I read to them one of the exhortations of Ephraim Syrus: The most awakening writer, I think, of all the ancients. We concluded our reading and conversation with a psalm; and I trust our God gave us his blessing.

153 Ibid, 144.
155 Ibid, 279.
156 Sebastian Brock suggests that Saint Ephrem remains unknown today (and I would add in Wesley's day also) and less accessible because he wrote in Syriac as opposed to Greek or Latin. Further, "his most important work is in poetry, and since we do not expect to find serious theology expressed in poetic form, we tend not to take seriously as a theological thinker someone who does happen to put forward his theological vision through the medium of poetry." See Sebastian Brock, The Luminous Eye, 13.
Wesley again mentions Ephrem in a journal entry some eleven years later. The entry offers no connection theologically, but rather an almost pastoral if not, personal connection. Wesley simply states, "I spent some hours in reading "The Exhortations of Ephrem Syrus." Surely never did any man, since David, give us such a picture of a broken and contrite heart."\(^{158}\)

One wonders in what senses Wesley seemed to have found, in his concern for a religion of the heart, a kindred spirit in Ephrem. Brock, in unpacking Ephrem, suggests that Ephrem is also concerned with a religion of the heart. It is in the heart, Ephrem contends, where the Bridegroom, identified as Christ, dwells with his people. He offers two examples.

How wonderful is this abundance
That the Lord should reside in us continually,
For He has left the heavens and descended:
Let us make holy for Him the bridal chamber of our hearts.
\((Armenian \ hymns \ 47, \ lines \ 46-7)\)

And,

With a circumcised heart
Uncircumcision becomes holy:
In the bridal chamber of such a person's heart
The Creator resides.
\((Virginity \ 44:20)\)^{159}

"Taking these two resonances together, one can see what Ephrem is conveying here…is schematically the following: the Divinity that resided on Mt. Sinai, but which was rejected by the intended bride, Israel, now resides in the heart of the baptized."\(^{160}\) The next step for Ephrem is to associate the heart with obedience to the commandments of God.

In the mirror of the commandments
I will behold my interior face
So that I may wash off the dirt on my soul

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\(^{159}\) Cited in Brock, The Luminous Eye, 128. Wesley also often uses the expression "the circumcision of the heart." Works, V, 202-12, XI, 368-9.

\(^{160}\) Ibid, 115, 128-9.
And clean away the filth of my mind,
Lest the Holy One to whom I am betrothed sees me
And stands back from me in abhorrence.

(Armenian hymns 6, lines 42-7)  

Again, although Wesley is not precise in identifying his specific sources in terms of Ephrem, one can hear the echoes of Ephrem in Wesley's *A Plain Account of Genuine Christianity*.

This love of my soul is always with me, is never absent; no, not for a moment…. Christianity promises this character shall be mine if I will not rest till I attain it. This is promised both in the Old Testament and the New…. And every command has the force of a promise…: "A new heart will I give you, and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."…Accordingly, when it is said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind;" it is not only a direction what I shall do, but a promise of what God will do in me, exactly equivalent with what is written elsewhere: "The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart [emphasis mine], and the heart of thy seed…”to love the Lord thy God will all thy heart, and with all thy soul."  

At the end of this doctrinal summary, Wesley identifies selected Church Fathers as the model and sources for his work.

All this may be allowed concerning the primitive Fathers. I mean particularly Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Origen, Clemens Alexandrinus, Cyprian; to whom I would add Macarius and Ephraim Syrus.

…I exceedingly reverence them, as well as their writings and esteem them very highly in love. I reverence them, because they were Christians, such Christians as are above described. And I reverence their writings, because they describe true, genuine Christianity, and direct us to the strongest evidence of the Christian doctrine.  

It is also plausible that Ephrem engaged Wesley's imagination not only in the personal dimension of the crisis of sin and the prospects of recovering the image of God, but also in the cosmological dimension. That is, Wesley found in Ephrem someone with his own deep

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161 Ibid, 129.
163 Ibid, 195.
appreciation for the character of the kind of perfecting, both personal and cosmological, required by virtue of the condition of sin. In his 1785 sermon, *The New Creation*, "the aged Wesley returned again and again to his vision of cosmic redemption: the restoration of all creation including the entire human family, as the final, full benefit of God's unbounded love."  

How many millions of creatures in the sea, in the air, and on every part of the earth, can now no otherwise preserve their own lives than by taking away the lives of others; by tearing in pieces and devouring their poor, innocent, unresisting fellow-creatures! Miserable lot of such innumerable multitudes, who, insignificant as they seem are the offspring of one common Father, the creatures of the same God of love! It is probably not only two-thirds of the animal creation, but ninety-nine parts out of a hundred, are under a necessity of destroying others in order to preserve their own life! But it shall not always be so. He that sitteth upon the throne will soon change the face of all things, and give a demonstrative proof to all his creatures that 'his mercy is over all his works.' The horrid state of things which at present obtains will soon be at an end. On the new earth no creature will kill or hurt or give pain to any other. The scorpion will have no poisonous sting, the adder no venemous teeth. The lion will have no claws to tear the lamb; no teeth to grind his flesh and bones. Nay, no creature, no beast, bird, or fish, will have any inclination to hurt any other. For cruelty will be far away, and savageness and fierceness be forgotten.

Wesley is very clear in this sermon that he is not simply speaking metaphorically and, according to Brock, one finds a similar sentiment in Ephrem's thought.

Moral evil on man's part, the misuse of his free will, disturbs the cosmic harmony and order. As Ephrem sees it, the ill effects on the natural order, brought about by human misuse of the divine gift of free will, can already be observed in the paradigmatic account of Paradise and the Fall:

The sprouting of the thorn (Gen. 3:18)  
Testified to the novel sprouting of wrong actions,  
For thorns did not sprout  
As long as wrong-doing had not yet burst forth;  
But once there had peered out  
Hidden wrong choices made by free will,

Then the visible thorns began to peer out from the Earth. (Heresies 28:9)

And in his Commentary on Genesis (II.31) Ephrem specifically states that, had there been no sin, the earth would never have brought forth the thorns. Likewise wild animals prove harmful to human beings only after the Fall: in Paradise they had life in harmony with Adam and Eve—a harmony that will be recovered in the eschatological Paradise, and occasionally anticipated on earth by the saints.  

Is Ephrem of Syria a source for Wesley's understanding of the created order and the cosmos under sin, judgment and ultimate redemption? Perhaps. At the very least it seems apparent that Ephrem provided Wesley with a kindred spirit that he did not find in his immediate situation and that Ephrem participates in Wesley's theological conversation on Christian perfection in the eighteenth century.

For Ephrem, "since creation cannot cross the ontological gap to the Creator, the Creator Himself crosses the chasm out of love for His creation; even so, He will only be experienced as having done so by those who seek Him with the right attitude—and this attitude is basically one of love and faith." Additionally, the prerequisite for experiencing God and for theological inquiry, is divine illumination. Although universal revelation is available to all, the human cultivation of spiritual senses is required to access knowledge of divine things. The inner eye of the mind, the luminous eye of Ephrem is a spiritual capacity to see all things, even the hidden things of God. Brock, working from Ephrem's primary documents, provides this summary of the luminous eye of Ephrem.

The inner eye of the mind (Faith 53:12), or of the soul (Faith 5:18), functions by means of faith, in much the same way that the exterior, physical eyes function by means of light. The presence of sin darkens this inner eye by keeping out the light of faith, and so, in order that this inner eye may see

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166 Brock, The Luminous Eye, 165.
properly, it needs to be kept lucid and clear. [Brock then adds a short poem from Ephrem]

Illumine with Your teaching
the voice of the speaker
and the ear of the hearer:
like the pupil of the eye,
let the ears be illumined,
for the voice provides the rays of light...

Through the eye that was darkened
the whole world has darkened,
and people groped
and thought that every stone
they stumbled upon was a god,
calling falsehood truth.

But when it was illumined by the other eye,
and the heavenly Light
that resided in its midst,
humanity became reconciled once again,
realizing that what they had stumbled on
was destroying their very life.\textsuperscript{168}

Ephrem's luminous eye is similar to if not the source of Wesley's doctrine of "spiritual senses."

In Wesley's century, empiricists denied that there were innate ideas resident in our minds prior to any experience, arguing that experience was the source of all foundational knowledge, including the knowledge of God. While Wesley allowed a role for the indirect knowledge of God via the empiricist's highway, he also desired a more direct knowledge as well. Yet, because he agreed with the empiricists that direct knowledge must come through the senses,\textsuperscript{169} he postulated that God provided humans with spiritual senses to sense spiritual realities, just as our physical senses sense physical realities.\textsuperscript{170} Wesley first spoke of spiritual senses in 1743.

\textsuperscript{168} Brock, \textit{The Luminous Eye}, 71-2.
It is necessary that you have the **hearing ear**, and the **seeing eye**… that you have a new class of senses opened in your soul…to avenues to the invisible world, to discern spiritual objects…And till you have these internal senses, till the eyes of your understanding are opened, you can have no apprehension of divine things, no idea of them at all…

How will it pass from things natural to spiritual; from the things that are seen to those that are not seen; from the visible to invisible world? What a gulf is here! By what art will reason get over the immense chasm? This cannot be till the Almighty comes in to your succour, and gives you that faith…

The vehicle of faith is what actualizes these senses.

But still none of our senses, no, not the sight itself, can reach beyond the bounds of this visible world…

But the wise and gracious Governor of the worlds…has prepared a remedy for this defect. He hath appointed faith to supply the defect of sense; to take us up where sense sets us down, and help us over the great gulf… Faith…is the "evidence of things not seen;"…

In particular, faith is an evidence to me of the existence of that unseen thing, my own soul. Without this I should be in utter uncertainty concerning it.

Wesley also speaks of having a single eye, full of light which allows for constant contemplation of God. In yet another of his sermons, Wesley expressed it in this way,

"If thine eye be" thus "single," thus fixed on God, "thy whole body shall be full of light." "Thy whole body:"—all that is guided by the intention, as the body is by thy eye…. The whole of these "shall be full of light;" full of true divine knowledge….He shall…cause thee to know wisdom secretly.

The single eye of Wesley is critical in one's path to perfection, for without it, complete love of God is not possible, nor is growth in holiness to be expected. For Wesley, the believer acquired spiritual senses in regeneration through the action of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, "for Wesley, regeneration meant the acquisition of the spiritual sense. In the standard sermons he compared

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See that the Lord is Good: John Wesley in the Christian Tradition of Spiritual Sensation," (Toronto, ON: Wycliffe College and the Toronto School of Theology, 2006).


the unawakened Christian with the child in the womb. Both lack the sensitive faculties to perceive the reality that surrounds them. For both it is the awakening of the senses that distinguishes the birth. n175

In light of the above interactions, it seems both plausible and reasonable to this writer that one of the possible sources of Wesley's nomenclature of "spiritual senses," and "a single eye," come from the writings of Ephrem the Syrian. n176

Finally, it is noted by Gordon Wakefield that "Wesley's devotion to Ephraim was one of his links with the Cappadocian Fathers, which influenced his idea of perfection." n177 It is Brock who recounts Ephrem's apocryphal visit to Basil. In that encounter, Ephrem, although offended by Basil's church vestments, ultimately recognized Basil "to be the pillar of fire he had seen previously in a vision, for as Basil preached Ephrem beheld the Holy Spirit proceed from his mouth in the form of a dove." n178 Brock immediately adds a word of explanation.

This encounter between Saint Ephrem and Saint Basil happens to be without any historical foundation… Although the meeting…is historically untrue, on a deeper symbolic level [which resonates with Ephrem's approach to Scripture, my observation] it does happen to express an important truth: underneath the external differences of presentation in the story—symbolized by Basil's off-putting rich vestments—Ephrem and the Cappadocian Fathers (of whom Basil should here simply be seen as the representative) have a great deal in common in their fundamental interests and concerns…(but) as it happens…Saint Gregory of Nyssa…would appear to be the closest of the Cappadocians to Saint Ephrem at this deep level of understanding. n179

175 Frederick Dreyer, "Faith and Experience in the Thought of John Wesley," 18.
176 It is also conceivable that Wesley imbibed some of Origen here in that Origen developed a theory of spiritual perception in analogy to the five senses.
178 Brock, The Luminous Eye, 145.
179 Ibid.
If Brock is correct, then one continues to see not only linkage and convergence among Wesley, Macarius, and Gregory of Nyssa but now also among Wesley, Ephrem, and Gregory of Nyssa.\cite{180}

For Gregory of Nyssa, "there are no limits to the degree of perfection, knowledge of God, or Godlikeness that can be progressively achieved. Grace restores the image and appropriates the likeness of God "as far as possible" in this life and in the next, as St. Paul suggests in 2 Corinthians 3:18."\cite{181} Deification for Gregory is a life of gradual transformation and perfection. Our heart's desire to see God continually grows as we make progress toward the God. Peter Bouteneff, in an extended word, provides a helpful perspective in finding convergences of theology between Wesley and Nyssa.

…while the Wesleys probably did not read much of Gregory of Nyssa's work, their concept of perfection finds reflection also in much of what is categorized as his ascetical writing. Within the large body of work dealing with many of the same issues, Gregory of Nyssa also devotes an entire treatise to the subject of perfection (De perfectione, or peri teleiotetos), in fact a meditation on the imitation of Christ, at times found with the subtitle "On What It is Necessary for a Christian to be." In addition to the ascetical corpus are three lengthy exegetical works (On the Psalms, On the Life of Moses, and On the Song of Songs), which are also guides and exhortations to attaining the highest goals of Christian life.

…the Wesleyan pursuit of perfection is ultimately not altogether different from Gregory of Nyssa's teaching that the more we have achieved purification in this world, the closer we are to the reality of the next. Wesleyan perfection, in its most Orthodox…sense, is finally to be seen as perfection in love, something that is initiated by the Holy Spirit in us and needs cultivation by us, something dynamic, proceeding from glory to glory in this world and, in a more radical way, from glory to glory in the next.

Wesley on occasion might have reached beyond what is felt to be the limits of the perfection attainable in the fallen world, yet the same eschatological

\begin{footnotes}
\item[180] Given the length of this paper, I offer only a brief interaction with Gregory of Nyssa, fully aware that work that is more detailed must be done in attempting to find convergence and influence between Nyssa and Wesley that goes beyond the Macarian Homilies.
\end{footnotes}
yearning, the sense that heaven can be anticipated here and now, can be suggested even by Gregory of Nyssa at times in ways as radical as Wesley did.\textsuperscript{182}

John Merritt has produced in his "Dialogue Within a Tradition: John Wesley and Gregory of Nyssa Discuss Christian Perfection," an excellent summary of key relationships between Wesley and Nyssa. He includes Gregory's definition of perfection and then comments on congruence with Wesley.

Perfection in the Christian life in my judgment (is) the participation of one's soul and speech and activities in all of the names by which Christ is signified, so that the perfect holiness, according to the eulogy of Paul, is taken upon oneself in "the whole body and soul and spirit," continuously safeguarded against being mixed with evil.\textsuperscript{183}

The Pauline fragment which Gregory incorporates in this definition of perfection is found in the text from which Wesley derived his key expression of "entire sanctification," with that term of Paul's in turn possibly serving as the source of the concluding words of Gregory's definition: "against being mixed with evil,

May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:23, RSV).\textsuperscript{184}

For both Gregory and Wesley, "perfection" was not to be compartmentalized as that which is heavenly only. Both were concerned with moral living or holiness, as Wesley expressed it. They did not suggest that humans could earn salvation through good works or holy living, rather, they thought that the potential for divinization or perfection lay in God's gracious creation of humanity in his own image.

\textsuperscript{182} Peter C. Bouteneff, "All Creation in United Thanksgiving: Gregory of Nyssa and the Wesleys on Salvation," 197.
This dynamic notion of discipleship as movement forward and upward takes its most original form in Gregory's famous notion of *epektasis*—"stretching out toward"—a perpetual progress toward and participation in God in love and knowledge. Consciously or unconsciously, as already noted in Wesley's theology of perfection, one once again hears the echo of Gregory of Nyssa in the thought of Wesley.

Although technically beyond the scope of the doctrine of perfection, Wesley's understanding of soteriology and anthropology were also impacted by his osmosis of Eastern theology. The person and work of the Holy Spirit certainly have a significant role in the theological thought of Wesley. However, that role is primarily redemptive, and it is therefore interwoven in Wesley's doctrine of salvation. Many of his standard sermons contain pneumatic soteriological concerns. In fact, "soteriology is an overarching theme in Wesley's pneumatology." Wesley's doctrine of salvation is actually three-dimensional: as pardon-salvation begun, holiness-salvation continued, and heaven-salvation completed.

Salvation emphasizes responsible grace. God did not just pardon us and stop there. Wesley broadened salvation beyond justification. In addition to imputing righteousness in justification, God imparts righteousness to us through sanctification. Wesley has an enduring concern about and never wanted to nullify the essence of holiness in the Christian life. He integrated the doctrine of sanctification to incorporate the significance of holy living as an essential participation in the transformation purpose of salvation... Our potential for growth in the likeness of God in Christ is dependent upon God's pardoning grace (justification) while the continuing salvific experience with God is contingent upon our responsive growth in Christ-likeness (sanctification).185

Since then Wesley's doctrine of justification is informed and shaped by his emphasis on sanctification, a brief word on soteriology and anthropology is in order. Western and Eastern branches of Christianity, while embracing similar understandings of God’s

redemptive plan, have nuanced their views in such a manner that theological distinctives have emerged.

…Early Latin and Greek theologians tended toward different understandings of the relation of creation, sin, and salvation. These differences developed further in the progressively separated Western (Latin) and Eastern (Greek) Christian traditions, with the eventual result that the soteriology of the main strands of Western Christianity (both Protestant and Roman Catholic) came to be characterized by a dominant *juridicial* emphasis on guilt and absolution, while Eastern Orthodox soteriology typically emphasized more the *therapeutic* concern for healing our sin-diseased nature…. The defining emphasis of Wesley’s understanding of sin and Christ life is also therapeutic, and…his exposure to early Greek theologians is part of the explanation for this.\(^{186}\)

In many sermons and homilies Wesley assimilated Eastern soteriology with its therapeutic concern for healing the sin-sick soul and its synergistic, responsible grace.\(^{187}\)

While preaching on self-denial, Wesley repeatedly used the imagery of sickness and disease in exhorting people to come to Christ, the physician of their soul.

In order for the healing of that corruption, that evil disease, which every man brings with him into the world, it is often needful to pluck out, as it were, a right eye, to cut off a right hand…. In all this, we may easily conceive our blessed Lord to act as the Physician of our souls…that we may be partakers of his holiness. If, in searching our wounds, he puts us to pain, it is only in order to heal them. He cuts away what is putrified or unsound, in order to preserve the sound part.\(^{188}\)

“While this image of Christ as Physician is much less common in the West…, it was a favorite of many early Eastern Christians (particularly Syriac-speaking).”\(^{189}\) Wesley does assent to humanity’s total depravity in the Latin sense, but his descriptions of sin are more relational than they are legal or forensic. Little or no reference is made to sin as guilt, rather sin is viewed

\(^{186}\) Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 23.

\(^{187}\) Christenson, "Theosis and Sanctification: John Wesley's Reformulation of a Patristic Doctrine," 73.


as disease. In his sermon *Original Sin* Wesley, as he attempts to outline the biblical picture of sin, chooses the language of Isaiah to lay out clearly his nomenclature for sin.

So Isaiah, concerning God’s peculiar people, (and certainly the Heathens were in no better condition,) “The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores.” The same account is given by all the Apostles, yea, by the whole tenor of the oracles of God.  

Given such language,

Wesley is best read as a theologian who was fundamentally committed to the therapeutic view of Christian life, who struggled to express this view in the terms of the dominant stream of his Western Christian setting, and who sought to integrate some of the central convictions of this setting into his more basic therapeutic viewpoint.

Running parallel to the divergent views on soteriology, it would also be expected that Western and Eastern traditions divide in their respective anthropologies. Wesley’s concurrence with a therapeutic emphasis in soteriology was fueled by his understanding of the fall of humanity. The West has followed the cues of Augustine, focusing almost entirely upon inherited guilt associated with the Fall and the subsequent need for remission of sin. While the East recognizes the need for forgiveness, it stresses instead the capacity of fallen humanity to be reconciled and energized in order to participate in the life of God. In his sermons, Wesley partially resonates with both, but his primary concern for divine/human interaction places his anthropology in the Eastern category, which, as noted, points toward a therapeutic soteriology. Wesley found the idea for divine/human interaction, which is again, the Eastern idea of theosis, a characteristic theme in the homilies of Chrysostom, along with the language of healing for

191 Maddox, *Reading Wesley as a Theologian,* 9-10.
the disease of sin. In fact, Wesley’s language related to sin echoes these words of Chrysostom.

For to cure the body when diseased is not an easy matter to every one; but to cure a sick soul is easy to all; and the sickness of the body requires medicines, as well as money, for its healing; but the healing of the soul is a thing that is easy to procure, and devoid of expense…. For inasmuch as from bodily sickness no great injury could arise, (for though we were not diseased, yet death would in any case come, and destroy and dissolve the body); but everything depends on the health of our souls; this being by far the more precious and necessary, He hath made the medicining of it easy, and void of expense or pain.

Wesley’s anthropological objective, like Chrysostom’s, was to accurately describe the condition of humanity such that one understands human need for Christ, moves toward acceptance with God, and finds the sin disease healed (the imago dei restored). Wesley contended that,

We may learn…what is the proper nature of religion, of the religion of Jesus Christ. It is … God’s method of healing a soul [original emphasis] which is thus diseased. Hereby the great Physician of souls applies medicines to heal this sickness; to restore human nature, totally corrupted in all its faculties. God heals all our Atheism by the knowledge of Himself, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent; by giving us faith, a divine evidence and conviction of God, and of the things of God—in particular of this important truth, “Christ loved me, and gave himself for me.”

For Chrysostom, and Wesley, the mystery of the incarnation corresponded to the mystery of redemption. The incarnation not only revealed God to humanity, it also revealed genuine humanity to humankind. Any view of grace which did not entail the divine/human interaction

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192 Wesley was fond of Chrysostom and referenced him several times as he defended himself against charges of heresy and false teaching. In 1744, Wesley asserted the authority of St. Chrysostom in teaching that the Holy Spirit was the gift “to all Christians; to all spiritual men, all who keep the commandments.” (See "Further Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," Works, VIII, 92). In 1762, in a Letter to The Rev. Dr. Horne, Wesley appeals to Chrysostom to affirm the doctrine of justification by faith alone, but a “faith whereby he (who) was justified immediately produced good works.” (See Works, IX, 113). Finally, Wesley appealed to Chrysostom in his arguments against predestination. (See "A Dialogue Between a Predestinarian and His Friend," Works, X, 265).
194 Wesley, "Sermon XLIV, Original Sin," Works, Volume VI, 64.
in the processes of incarnation and salvation would have been meaningless to Chrysostom in particular and to the Eastern tradition in general. For Chrysostom, it made no sense to speak of God as becoming flesh if humankind could not become divine. Further, if humanity could not enter into God, there could be no meaningful communion with God. On the other side of that coin, Chrysostom asked how God could enter humanity if humanity could not enter into God. Of what value would it be to speak of salvation in forensic terms at the expense of the idea of union with God? Chrysostom’s concept of theosis was an attempt to declare that because of the incarnation real change (sanctification) takes place in human nature, not simply relative change (justification) as was commonly believed in the West. The Eastern notion of theosis then entailed the means by which humanity could partake of God’s nature just as God could partake of human nature.\textsuperscript{195} In that vein, it is important to underscore the fact that both Chrysostom and Wesley demand holiness in life. A theosis equation that minimized human interaction was inconceivable in their theologies. "Unless the message of grace produces fruits of repentance and reform, it is shallow and indefensible." Worse, it is simply "moralizing without the compassion of the gospel has also proved incapable of effecting these fruits….. Chrysostom and Wesley, each…recognized that God and humankind need to work together in producing a new world. God's gift and the human response belong to the saving process."\textsuperscript{196}

In ideological terms…rather than asking “How can I be justified or pardoned?” Wesley asked, “How can I be healed?” In his descriptions of sin the dominant metaphors are those of disease with subsequent metaphors of healing (sanctification) as the cure. Hence, although Wesley stands squarely with the Reformer’s doctrine of justification…his own doctrine of justification is informed and shaped by his accent upon the “fullness of faith” (sanctification). So it is that he insists on “free human responsiveness,” but not as the


\textsuperscript{196} Frances Young, "God's Word Proclaimed: The Homiletics of Grace and Demand in John Chrysostom and John Wesley," \textit{Orthodox and Wesleyan Scriptural Understanding and Practice}, 145.
soteriologically decisive factor. Rather, free human responsiveness is the vehicle by which sovereign grace…enables the human to participate with and in the Great Physician and be healed and be restored to the *imago dei*.

As mentioned previously, Wesley generally concurred with the West’s understanding of fallen human nature. Western Christianity eventually affirmed two major effects of the Fall on humanity: 1) humanity inherits the guilt of original sin; and 2) as one sign of God’s judgment, human faculties are depauperate to the point that humanity is free to do little more than sin. Eastern Christianity denied both of these effects.

They contend that the true significance of the Fall was our loss of the Spirit’s immediate Presence, resulting in the introduction of mortality into human life. This mortality weakened our human faculties and effaced our moral Likeness of God. Thus, the Fall did render us prone to sin, but not incapable of co-operating with God’s offer of healing. As a result, we only become guilty when we reject the offered grace of God, like Adam and Eve did.

Wesley, in reaction to the forensic emphasis of justification and the inculcation of guilt from Adam, ultimately declared that any inherited human guilt was universally cancelled at birth, as one benefit of Christ’s redemption. Although Wesley agreed that physical death is a punishment for the sin of Adam and therefore death afflicts all people, including infants, independent of their personal sin, still he insisted that spiritual or eternal death is inflicted only for actual sins.

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197 McCormick, *Theosis*, 43. Wesley’s emphasis on grace as the vehicle that enables the human to participate with and in the Great Physician differs slightly from Chrysostom’s approach, which lays more emphasis on human will and determination than grace.
198 Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 74.
201 John B. Cobb, *Grace and Responsibility*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 82. In Wesley’s *Works*, Wesley writes a detailed and extended section called *The Doctrine of Original Sin, According to Scripture, Reason, and Experience*. In defending his position he appeals at one point to “the writers before St. Augustine,” and then proceeds to cite Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Gregory of Nazianzus, Athanasius, Basil, and Hilary. (Wesley, *Works*, Volume IX, 430). The entire discourse is found on pages 196-464. His point is that these Church Fathers (primarily Eastern) identified the entry of mortality into human life as the inevitable consequence (rather than the juridical punishment) of Adam’s separation from God. Mortality debilitated and
As in the Eastern Christian tradition, salvation history is more a journey to renewal, the actual transformation or sanctification of Christians by divine grace, and less an almost singular focus on being justified of past sin as an escape from damnation and the promised bliss in the next life. Wesley believed that divine grace effects more than pardon; it is not (simply) a legal transaction to remove the guilt of sin. Grace also and especially is the transforming power of God in human life. It is a power associated closely with the presence of God as believers experience decisive renewal in the Spirit (conversion) and persistent maturation of this renewal (sanctification). 

Corrupted Adam’s nature, as it has the nature of every person since, which accounts for humanity’s sinful inclinations. 

202 Cobb, 153-4.
Chapter 3

The Anglican Patristic Renaissance and Wesley

I. Brief Overview of the Church of England and Patristics

According to Jean-Louis Quantin, "The Fathers were much read, studied, and quoted in the Protestant Church of England under Edward (1537-1553) and then under Elizabeth (1533-1603). The legacy of that first period of Reformed patristics to later generations of divines should not be underestimated,"\(^1\) in that it finally limited the idea of the "Fathers" to the writers of the first centuries after Christ. Specifically, the Anglican divines of the sixteenth century "restricted the name, or at least the authority, of the Fathers to the Christian writers of the first centuries,….or limited themselves even further to the first five centuries."\(^2\) It is certain that "medieval and early modern scholars, Protestant Reformers, and the Caroline divines studied Augustine, Jerome, John Chrysostom, and other church fathers—from the late fifteenth century onward, in printed editions."\(^3\)

In light of this, the purpose of this chapter, while examining the pneumatology and doctrine of theosis as demonstrated in selected Anglican Divines whom Wesley quoted in his *Works*, is an attempt to determine whether Wesley's penchant toward the Greek Fathers was mediated through the resurgence in Patristic interest and scholarship within the Anglican Church itself during this period of time. Some conclusions will be provided upon review of the selected Anglican Divines.

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Thomas Middleton suggests, "it is not surprising that there have always been Anglican divines, parish priests as well as academics, whose theology was formed by the mind of the Fathers." He indicates further that the root of the patristic directional compass finds its source in "the Anglican reformers of the 16th century who were the first to make the appeal to the Fathers a foundation stone of their divinity, building their theology on patristic dogma, belief and practice."

A technological advance and two major historical movements combined in the sixteenth century to focus the attention of many literate Europeans on the patristic literature—the body of theological treatises, scriptural commentaries, conciliar proceedings, and letters of the church fathers from the New testament times to the end of the eighth century. The printing press made it possible for texts and commentaries to be disseminated on a scale unimaginable to those who had had to rely on manuscripts.... The quantum jump in the knowledge gained from sixteenth-century scholarship provided the foundation for the later more sophisticated systematic works.

At the same time, the "Fathers were not regarded as sources of doctrine but as repositories of useful quotations to prove a doctrine garnered elsewhere, in theory from Scripture, in practice from the works of modern Protestant theologians." As Arthur B. Ferguson puts it in his description of the use of history in sixteenth-century England: the past is used as merely a "rich treasury of exempla to be drawn upon piecemeal for whatever didactic purpose the situation of the moment required."

An examination of Anglican roots will demonstrate that the Anglican study of the Fathers was primarily in relation to controversies that Anglicanism had to face in the aftermath of the Reformation and the struggle for Anglican identity,

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5 Ibid.
7 Ibid, 83.
rather than for their own sake. Throughout these controversies it is the Fathers who speak, not only in the defense of Anglicanism, but in defense of themselves and a proper use [original emphasis] of their writings. In this sense there is a kinship with the Fathers and the search for Anglican identity, in that it was the controversies of their own times that gave birth to their writings.\(^9\)

Notwithstanding this approach "from the early years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth…we see in the divines of our reformed Church of England an insistence upon the study of the ancient Fathers as a guide to the understanding of Holy Scripture in the context of the ancient Church."\(^{10}\)

England,…was part of (a) larger scene of patristic activity and yet developed her own distinctions of emphasis. In the seventeenth century, the country emerged as a center for patristic studies whose reputation for scholarly achievement burns bright to this day. The century was marked at the beginning by the edition princeps of the Greek text of Chrysostom in the eight volumes edited by Henry Savile,…Yet England in the sixteenth century made no single major contribution either to patristic texts or to solving problems of authorship.\(^{11}\)

Still, according to Mark Vessey, during the progression of the sixteenth century, "the stock of patristic texts and expertise in England steadily increased."\(^{12}\) He adds that "(t)aken as a whole, the evidence of insular interest in the Fathers contained in sixteenth-century library catalogues,… school and university statutes and curricula…and…thousand of patristic citations in extant works of religious instruction, devotion, and polemic, is very imposing."\(^{13}\) Michael Ramsey suggests an increasing interest in the ancient Fathers from the mid-sixteenth to the early seventeenth century. His contention is that the earlier phase constricted the use of the

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\(^9\) Middleton, Ibid, 6-7.
\(^{11}\) Haaugaard, Ibid, 40.
\(^{13}\) Vessey, Ibid, 175.
Fathers to evidentiary study—that is, to demonstrate that some of the later Roman Church doctrines were not extant in antiquity.

Whereas the Edwardian and Elizabethan divines had been interested in the Fathers chiefly as a means of proving what had or had not been the primitive doctrine and practice, the Caroline divines went farther in using the thought and piety of the Fathers within the structure of their own theological exposition.  

As a result, by "the seventeenth-century the Church of England claimed to be the most faithful to antiquity, and to the beliefs and practices of the primitive Christians, of all the Christian Churches in the world. Increasing emphasis on the authority of the Fathers was an important factor in the construction of a distinct confessional identity in England." In the seventeenth century the challenge faced by the Anglican divines was the emergence of stronger evidence of the diversity of Christian teaching after the end of the apostolic era than had ever been noted since the introduction of the printing press. Beginning in the 1630s attention comes to be focused on the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, resulting in the Epistles of Clement being published first at Oxford in 1633. Some Protestants of this era, "on reading this literature of the second century, found reasons to consider whether an Episcopal church order was not of greater antiquity than earlier assumed; (and) many learned to look behind and beyond Augustine…"

…conventional Protestantism both in Europe and Britain set to work in this century in an honest attempt to grapple with the Church Fathers taken as a whole. It was the seventeenth century, rather than the preceding century…which got down to work to prepare volumes of 'patrology,'....The earliest attempts, such as those by the Heidelberg Protestant, Abraham Scultetus (1566-1624) in 1598 and Daniel Tossanus (1541-1602) in 1603, the English writer…Thomas James (1573-1629) in 1611, and French Protestants André Rivet (1572-1651) in 1619, and Jean Daillé (1594-1670) in 1632—though of

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15 Haaugaard, Ibid, 43.
quite mixed quality—were one and all attempts to move beyond the somewhat 'atomistic' quotation of Patristic writers which had too much characterized both Catholic and Protestant polemical appeals to this material in the sixteenth century.  

In England in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, following the restoration of the Stuarts to the throne in 1660 (in the person of Charles II) and following the Acts of Uniformity in 1662, there existed a considerable concern on the part of many Anglicans for the Christianity of antiquity.

John Wesley was the heir of a particular tradition of Anglican patristic study that had developed in the late 1500s and the 1600s…. This Anglican tradition—we refer to it as "Caroline" Anglicanism—saw the Church of England as the true heir of the "primitive" church—that is, the church of the earliest centuries, through at least the fourth century. Caroline Anglicans argued that the Episcopal polity of the Church of England replicated the polity of the early church, that the liturgy of the Church of England faithfully reflected the liturgy of the primitive church, and that the doctrines of the Church of England reflected the doctrinal inheritance of the early fathers and the earliest Ecumenical Councils,…

The expressions "primitive church," "primitive Christian faith," "primitive Christianity," and "ancient church," were typically used by Anglican restorationists to refer to the characteristics of the historic church in its various settings as described in the New Testament or the church of antiquity up through the fourth century. All the expressions were used to portray primitive Christianity as a perceived "golden or ideal age," an early time when the church was free from the human accretions, which, in their view, distorted its doctrine and practice.

19 See Ted A. Campbell, John Wesley and Christian Antiquity: Religious Vision and Cultural Change, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 9-21. Campbell divides Anglican primitivists into "conservative" and "programmatic." Both groups affirmed "Christian antiquity as an authority for Christian doctrine and practice." However, the conservative primitivists are those who wished to defend the Anglicanism of their day "by the appeal to Christian antiquity" and viewed "the ancient church's life as a pattern realized in the faith and practice of
In the seventeenth century England also "emerged as a center for patristic studies whose reputation for scholarly achievement burns bright to this day." The scholarly achievements of seventeenth-century patristic and classical scholars, many of whom were essentially sponsored by the Church of England, were circulated well beyond the universities "through translations, popularizations, and digests of patristic sources and histories of the early church." The critical study of the Patristic tradition, notwithstanding the important work of the sixteenth century English divines, really began in earnest in the early years of the seventeenth century. In Oxford Savile undertook an edition of the writings of John Chrysostom by examining all known manuscripts of his works in Great Britain as well as collating manuscripts from the Continent.

Felix R. Arnott is effusive in his review of this era as he declares, "The seventeenth Century was an age of vast erudition. The number of marginal references to the Scriptures and the writings of the Fathers are amazing." Nevertheless, Norman Sykes suggests, "the theological climate was undergoing a marked revolution as the defenses of patristic orthodoxy...gave place...

Anglicans," while programmatic primitivists also wished to defend Anglicanism, but were willing to change the liturgy and piety of their day by reinstituting, renewing, or reviving the model of the ancient church's life (20, 23). Campbell at times adjusts and perhaps even contradicts his own conclusion cited above when he writes, "The study of ancient Christianity in general (Eastern and Western) had been prized by Anglicans throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, although in their cases the appeal to antiquity was made more often to defend the status quo, (original emphasis) that is, the Established Church, rather than to challenge their own culture." Ted A. Campbell, "John Wesley and the Asian Roots of Christianity," Asbury Journal of Theology (AJT), 8:2/1994, 287 [281-294].

20 Haugaard, Ibid, 40.
23 Felix R. Arnott, "Anglicanism in the Seventeenth Century," in Anglicanism (Eds.), Paul Elmer More and Frank Leslie Cross, (Cambridge, UK: James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 2008), liii. Within the same paragraph Arnott seems to retract his statement by insisting that "passages from the Bible and the Fathers are quoted...at every turn, often without much regard to their contexts or real meaning. Texts were useful foils to gain advantage over one's adversary. Scholarship was ponderous rather than brilliant, and with a few notable exceptions used mainly in order to lay low theological opponents." (Ibid.).
to the age of reason and the triumph of the Latitudinarians.  

The result, is that both among Roman Catholics on the Continent and Anglicans in England, "among a section of thinkers, the reputation of the Fathers was sliding downhill between 1680 and 1730," led by the Latitudinarians.  

Although Sykes contends strongly for this devolution in terms of the study and appreciation of the Fathers, he also appears to vacillate, in that he quotes from the famous *Brief Account of the New Sect of Latitude-Men*, sections that affirm the Latitudinarian esteem of the Fathers, particularly in terms of their doctrinal sources.

From the sacred writings of the apostles and evangelists, in interpreting whereof they carefully attend to the sense of the ancient Church, by which they conceive that modern ought to be guided; and therefore they are very conversant in all the genuine monuments of the ancient Fathers, those especially of the first and purest ages…. Let no man accuse them of hearkening too much to their own reason, since their reason steers by so excellent a compass, the ancient Fathers and Councils of the Church. For Reason is that faculty whereby a man must judge everything, nor can a man believe anything except he has some reason for it; whether that reason be a deduction from the light of nature and those principles which are the candle of the Lord, set up in the soul of every man that hath not willfully extinguished it; or a branch of divine revelation in the oracles of holy Scripture; or the general interpretation of genuine antiquity, or the proposal of our own Church consentaneous thereto; or lastly the result of some or all of these;…

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25 Sykes, Ibid, 142. Contrasting with Sykes is the conclusion of Cornwall, "...the seventeenth and eighteenth century writers gathered their evidence from diverse sources, eras, and places. The evidence was laid out chronologically, usually beginning with Clement of Rome or Ignatius, for they were the oldest witnesses to the apostolic faith…. A survey of the editions, translations, and accompanying literature on the fathers published during the period 1680-1745 reveals extensive interest in patristic study." Robert D. Cornwall, "The Search for the Primitive Church: The Use of Early Church Fathers in the High Church Anglican Tradition, 1680-1745, *Anglican and Episcopal History*, LIX, 3, September 4 1990, 314-15 [303-29].

26 Simon Patrick, "A Brief Account of the New Sect of Latitude-Men, together with some Reflections upon the New Philosophy," (London, UK, 1662) as cited by Sykes, Ibid, 147-8. Sykes, after offering the perspective of Bishop Patrick goes on to argue that the invasion of reason, science and philosophy ultimately eroded patristic authority in certain realms of the Church of England, and concludes that "thus was the axe laid sharply to the root of the tree of patristic study and the authority of the Fathers; and such was the unhappy declension from the confident affirmation of Simon Patrick concerning the men of latitude, that in interpreting the apostles and evangelists, they carefully attend to the sense of the ancient Church by which they conceive the modern ought to be guided." Sykes, Ibid, 169.
Notwithstanding Sykes' bifurcated conclusion, what emerges from a survey of the seventeenth century is that the theological method of this period demonstrates a concern with the finality of the fundamentals of the faith along with historical affirmation of such. The methodology operative among the Church of England was firmly based, and although not dominated by change, certainly was ready to adjust and assimilate as necessary. "This solidarity was due in part... to the emphasis on the historical in the form taken by the appeal to antiquity. The criterion of the first centuries was not regarded only in terms of the verification of fundamentals, but as a factual contact of present and past history in the continuity of the Church." ²⁷

It is clear... that the appeal to antiquity is so much an element in the theological method of Anglicanism in the seventeenth century that any attempt to evaluate it must necessarily be selective. Such an attempt shows that while the appeal to antiquity was not the creation of the seventeenth century, it was during that period that it evolved as a positive element and as an integral part of the Anglican approach to theological questions... [and] the appeal to antiquity during the period was in general so much a part of theological method that it was regarded as an accepted Anglican characteristic. ²⁸

Further, patristic scholarship done by the high church Anglicans during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries "looked to the primitive church as the authoritative interpreter of scripture, Christian piety and discipline." ²⁹

The patristic scholarship of the high church Anglicans during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries stood as a bridge between the Caroline divines of the early and mid-seventeenth century and the Oxford Movement of the nineteenth century... In line with the Caroline divines and the Tractarians, high church Anglicans, in the fifty years following the Glorious Revolution of 1688–89, looked to the primitive church as the authoritative

²⁸ McAdoo, Ibid, 316.
interpreter of scripture, the final arbitrators in doctrinal disputes, and as a model of Christian piety and discipline.\(^{30}\)

In the early seventeenth century the degree of authority assigned to the Fathers does not seem to have changed a great deal. "On the whole, Anglican divines were certainly more willing…to argue their case from the Fathers, but they also maintained the primacy of Scripture, which the appeal to antiquity was simply intended to confirm. The Fathers did not complement Scripture, they provided the best interpretation of it."\(^{31}\) Although a slightly different posture, Irena Backus contends that the status of the Fathers in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century Anglican theology reflected a somewhat ambiguous position. She suggests that the Church of England became more and more preoccupied with the suppression of Dissent, particularly after 1640, which led to a growing emphasis being placed on the Fathers.\(^{32}\)

Although Patristic scholarship from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century was broadly based, the non-jurors and high church Anglicans were its most consistent advocates during this time.\(^{33}\) They "placed a strong emphasis on episcopacy, divine right monarchy, the sacraments, 

\(^{30}\) Ibid.

\(^{31}\) Ibid, 990.


\(^{33}\) Cornwall, Ibid, 306. "The original Non-Jurors…refused to swear the oath of loyalty to William in 1689, for they had formerly pledged their oath to James II who had been deposed. They believed that authority for the Church lay neither in pope nor people, but in the Divine Right of the rightful King, to whom passive obedience was therefore due. This group of their successors,…had strong affinities with the Eastern Orthodox Church,…" Frederick Hunter, John Wesley and the Coming Comprehensive Church, (London, UK: Epworth Press, 1968), 9. "The High Church movement was itself divided by the 'non-juring' controversy: those who refused to swear allegiance to William III on the grounds that they had already sworn inviolable oaths to James II came to be known as the Nonjurors: their principal concern was to protect the church both from too much state intervention and from what they perceived to be the dangerously subversive 'toleration' of dissent; and some of their more prominent members, notably William Law (1686-1761) and Thomas Ken (1637-1711), exerted an important influence on Anglican spirituality." Gordon Mursell, English Spirituality From 1700 to the Present Day, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001, 12). J.W.C. Wand sees the beginning of high churchmanship in Queen Elizabeth I in the mid sixteenth century. Wand describes the High Church as a middle road between the two extremes of Geneva and Rome. He concludes that Hooker's position on several key ingredients provided a foundation for the High Church. These ingredients include a synthesis "between the evangelical, the catholic and the rationalist strains" of the church. Further, the authority of the Church was articulated, along with the "puritan contention that everything has been already settled by the bible," thus allowing
and the authority of the Church Fathers. " Although the term "High Church" is best understood as a loose and general description, nevertheless a certain consistency of definition can be applicable to the period.

A High Churchman in the Church of England tended to uphold in some form the doctrine of apostolic succession which was the basis of his strong attachment to the catholicity and apostolicity of the Church of England as a branch of the universal catholic church, within which he did not include those reformed bodies which had willfully abandoned episcopacy, so that a distinction was made between Nonconformist congregations and continental Protestant churches. He believed in the supremacy of Scripture and set varying degrees of value on the testimony of authoritative tradition, but generally insisted that the Bible needed to be interpreted in the light of such authoritative standards as the Prayer Book, the Catechism and the Creeds. He tended to value the writings of the early Fathers, especially as witnesses to scriptural truth when a catholic consent of them could be established…. He tended to cultivate a practical spirituality, which many emphasized as based on sacramental grace and nourished by acts of self-denial, rather than on any subjective conversion experience or unruly manifestations of the Holy Spirit. He invariably stressed the importance of a religious establishment but insisted on the duty of the state for reason as a tool of biblical interpretation. J.W.C. Wand, Anglicanism in History and Today, (London, UK: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1961), 96-97. Yet, finding a clear definition of High Churchmanship "has proven extraordinarily difficult. The moment a definition is tried it is found wanting because "High Churchmen" can be found who do not seem to fit the pattern." (Jeffery S. Chamberlain, Accomodating High Churchmen, The Clergy of Sussex, 1700-1745, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 13. "Although the fortunes of High Churchman ship ebbed and flowed, it seems always to have commanded the allegiance of sizeable sections of the clergy." John Walsh and Stephen Taylor, "Introduction: The Church and Anglicanism in the 'long' eighteenth century," (Eds.) John Walsh, Colin Haydon and Stephen Taylor, The Church of England, c. 1689- c. 1833, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 33. Again, although some ambiguity exists in terms of definitions, nevertheless political and religious affinities assist in forging an understanding of the High Church party for "in the early eighteenth century High Churchmanship suggested the Tory party at prayer." (Ibid, 34; see also Chamberlain, 13-14; Charles J. Abbey and John H. Overton, The English Church in the Eighteenth Century, (London, UK: Longmans, Green, and Co., Volume 2, 1878), 8-10; John R. H. Moorman, A History of the Church in England, (London, UK: Adam and Charles Black, 1954), 269-273. According to Shontz, "The two most influential parties in the seventeenth-century Church of England were the Calvinist English Puritans and the Laudian High Churchmen. The latter were named after the (in)famous Archbishop William Laud (1573-1645), whose sweeping reforms in Anglican worship earned him the disdain of the Puritans…. Laud was himself part of a growing movement within the Anglican Church, rooted in the English Reformation, which attempted to define its theology without leaning on the progress of the Continental Reformers." William H. Shontz, "Anglican Influence on John Wesley's Soteriology," 33-34. "The majority of the Anglican clergy, including many of those in the universities, …were Tory in politics. They yearned for a lost and mythical partnership between church and state, which would exact strict conformity from the Anglican clergy and laity… 'The Church in danger' was their slogan." John Spurr, The Post-Reformation, 1603-1714, (London, UK: Pearson Longman Publishing, 2006), 205. 34 Geordan Hammond, "High Church Anglican Influences on John Wesley's Conception of Primitive Christianity", 1732-1735, Anglican and Episcopal History; Jun 2009; 78, 2, 174 [174-207].
as a divinely ordained rather than merely secular entity, to protect and promote the interests of the Church.35

Additionally, although there was a "dynamic and diverse character of Anglicanism in the long eighteenth century," still "Anglican theologians were engaged in the scholarly study of Eastern Patristic…texts."36 This was, in some sense a new and yet an old avocation. By the end of Elizabeth's reign, it was the Caroline Divines "who rediscovered the Greek Fathers and indeed, with the help of new editions coming off the continental presses, became more expert in them than were most of the modern Greeks. This discovery…led to an increasing interest in coming to closer quarters with the Eastern Church."37 Contributing to this interest was the "paradigmatic shift by the High Church men from continental Reformation emphases of Western, forensic, and juridical soteriology to a more Eastern, imparted, and therapeutic soteriology grounded in patristic interpretations of the faith."38 By the eighteenth century, in some sense, the study of Eastern patristic texts went deeper than simply a scholarly pursuit.

The Non-Juring clergy, numbering as many as 600 in the late seventeenth century, did not view themselves as a political movement. Instead, they determined to live with integrity within the Anglican faith in which they had been born and which they continued to serve, albeit outside

35 Peter Nockles, "Church parties in the pre-TRACTarian Church of England 1750-1833: the 'Orthodox'—some problems of definition and identity," (Eds.) John Walsh, Colin Haydon and Stephen Taylor, The Church of England, c. 1689-c. 1833, From Toleration to Tractarianism, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 335-336. Addleshaw is effusive in his description of High Churchmen: "The High Church divines of the seventeenth century set out to restore the grandeur of Christian truth, and teach it anew to the countrymen, who had largely forgotten it in the turmoil of the Reformation. It is a theology characterized by a veneration for the Fathers, by a wholeness finding its centre in the Incarnation, and a massive learning. Instead of attempting to create a scientific system of theology…, they take seriously the claim of the English reformers to be returning to antiquity. They turned to the Fathers and there…found something to enrich, to enlarge, to invigorate, to give beauty, proportion, and force to their theology." G.W.O. Addleshaw, The High Church Tradition, A Study in the Liturgical Thought of the Seventeenth Century, (London, UK: Faber and Faber Limited, 1941), 25.


the strictures of the established Church. Yet, "the nonjurors cannot be understood in political terms alone; they increasingly distinguished themselves from conforming clergy by a high church theology, which came to be characterized by their burning reverences for the primitive church."  

Not only did the Anglican divines of the seventeenth century hold the Fathers in special esteem, according to Michael Ramsey, "The study of the Fathers created the desire to reach out to Eastern Christendom."  

Addleshaw declares that the high church divines of the seventeenth century sought to restore forgotten Christian theology to the Church, "a theology characterized by a veneration for the Fathers," with a particular interest in the Greek Fathers.

…they saw themselves as heirs to the Undivided Church, when East and West were one. They looked back to the roots of the Church in Britain before the Reformation, and…to the Christian Tradition they had received…. Seeking affirmation of their identity, they opened negotiations with the Greek Orthodox Church, believing that it was to this faith that they…should be united…. Negotiations were opened through the mediation of Arsenios, Metropolitan of the Thebaid, who had come to London in 1714 to raise money for the Patriarchate of Alexandria. In August 1716, the Non-Jurors composed a set of proposals to the four Eastern Patriarchs…outlining what was needed, and what they would be prepared to do, to come to a concordat with the Eastern Church…. The proposals are of…interest for…they summarize the practices and beliefs of the High Church of that time; they demonstrate considerable knowledge of Orthodoxy and of the doctrinal differences between Orthodoxy and Anglicanism…. Above all, they are written …in the tone of a serious question to explore the possibilities of union with another Church.

Although such a union did not proceed until early in the eighteenth century, the association with the Eastern branch of the Church did not disappear. Indeed, the Non-jurors

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"formed in effect a separate Anglican church that continued into the nineteenth century. They ultimately were led to engage in correspondence with the Eastern Orthodox churches in the hope of establishing communion with them…. In 1763, John Wesley, failing to find any Anglican bishop willing to ordain Methodist preachers, won the agreement of the exiled Greek bishop of Arcadia…to do so.  

While at Oxford, Joseph Bingham (1668-1723) demonstrated a deep and profound knowledge of Patristic doctrine. Even after his sudden departure from Oxford in 1695, his interest in Patristic studies did not wane. During this period, "(o)utside Oxford and Cambridge the English aristocracy were building up with unremitting zeal great libraries which were of supreme importance for English medieval scholarship." Further, many of these libraries included volumes of the Greek Fathers.

Mediaeval libraries often contained Patristic writings, such as those of Gregory the Great; and the Greek Fathers, in translation, were more common than one would expect. However, collections of Patristic works, in the original languages, were not so common and Bingham was immensely fortunate in finding at Winchester Cathedral an excellent library containing an extensive collection of manuscripts of the Fathers, which enabled him to pursue his aim of compiling a completion collection of the Antiquities of the Christian Church…. The Cathedral Library at Winchester had a long history even in Bingham's day. (By 1548) the following Fathers were to be placed in the Library: Augustine, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, Jerome, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Cyprian and Theophlact.

There is little argument for the fact that John Wesley was the heir of this specific tradition of Anglican patristic study. This tradition viewed the Church of England as the true heir of the

44 David J. Melling, "British Isles," (Eds.), Ken Parry, David J. Melling, Dimitri Brady, Sidney H. Griffith and John F. Healey, The Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2001), 89. According to Melling, early in the eighteenth century, the Non-jurors, because of their high doctrine of church and sacrament, engaged in correspondence with the Eastern Orthodox in an attempt to begin communion with them. However, for a variety of theological issues, further steps were not taken. Wesley's relationship with the exiled Greek bishop of Arcadia appears to have been broken after the bishop ordained a number of Methodist clergy without Wesley's knowledge. Ibid.
46 Ibid, 178-9. Bingham's Antiquities of the Christian Church was begun in 1702 and completed in ten volumes by 1722.
"primitive" church. Wesley studied early Christian literature and read a great deal of Anglican literature that valued their connection with the early church.

The Wesleys…were indeed influenced by the Christian tradition they inherited and took for granted; they were faithful to the liturgy, doctrines, and sacraments of the Church of England; they were influenced by the Eastern Fathers and by Roman Catholic mystical writers…. The Methodist revival assimilated the work of many Christians and many movements through the organizing and conceptualizing genius of John Wesley. However, the Wesleys were not the sum total of the influences on them. They did not consciously synthesize various strands of thought and organization and thereby create a great movement. To suggest this would reductionism. What rather happened was that the Wesleys inherited a Christian tradition at the beginning of the eighteenth century that contained a cluster of elements that provided the background wherein they could develop their vision of God.47

William Shontz observes, "Wesley followed the example of the High Church tradition, with which he consciously identified himself, appealing to Scripture, Tradition, and Reason to justify his theology."48 Early in 1738 Wesley wrote, "The English writers, such as Bishop Beveridge, Bishop Taylor, and Mr. Nelson, a little relieved me…. Their accounts of Christianity I could easily see to be, in the main, consistent both with reason and Scripture."49

In 1789 Wesley gave an account of his early life in relation to the Church of England. "From a child I was taught to love and reverence the Scripture, the oracles of God and next to these esteem the primitive Fathers… Next after the primitive Church I esteemed our own, the Church of England, as the most scriptural national Church in the world."50 Additionally, during this period, according to John English,

48 William H. Shontz, "Anglican Influences on John Wesley's Soteriology," WTJ, 32, 1, Spring 1997, 36 [33-52]. It should be noted that the writings of church moderates Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688), Henry More (1614-1687), Simon Patrick (1626-1707), John Smith (1618-1652), John Tillotson (1630-1694) and John Worthington (1618-1671) appear in the lists of books that Wesley read and published for use by his societies.
49 Wesley, Works (BCE), 18, 212.
50 Wesley, Works (BCE), 9, 538.
Priest and bishops feared that the church was losing the youth of the towns and cities and that...deism [was] eroding the faith of the ruling orders. Drawing upon the Anglican tradition of liturgy and catechesis, the clergy appealed for *metanoia*, a New Testament term which can be translated into repentance or conversion. *Metanoia* comprised an inward change, the purification of a person's motives or intentions, and an outward change, the development of godly habits.... The Christian who repented or was converted began to lead a new life. The goal was Christian perfection, or, as the Greek Fathers...put it, "deification." 51

In light of this, it has been submitted that Wesley's focus on perfection, sanctification, and love is hardly a unique focus and can be found in the writings of the Anglicans of this period, so much so, that Shontz concludes that "far from being an innovator within Protestantism with his teaching of Christian perfection, John Wesley was the heir of a theological tradition firmly established in the Church of England." 52 To this charge Wesley, at least to some degree, would himself plead guilty. In 1777, in his *An Answer to Mr. Rowland Hill's Tract, Entitled, "Imposture Detected,"* Wesley affirms his orthodoxy and loyalty to the teachings of the Church of England.

> The perfection I hold is so far from being contrary to the doctrine of our Church, that it is exactly the same which every Clergyman prays for every Sunday: "Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name." I mean neither more nor less than this. In doctrine, therefore, I do not dissent from the Church of England. 53

Even with this acknowledgement it remains difficult to find within the corpus of Wesley's writings evidentiary references that underline his understanding of the doctrine of perfection within the Church of England.

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52 Shontz, Ibid, 37.
II. The Use of the Fathers by the Anglican Divines (1558-1710) and Wesley's Appropriation of this Practice

A review of Wesley's *Works* produces a long list of Anglican Divines for whom at least a passing reference is given. Wesley demonstrates some acquaintance with at least 15 Anglican writers, beginning with Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626) and concluding with George Bull (1634-1710). Gordon Rupp suggests,

> It is important to remember that this tradition…was not mainly concerned with polemic and polity, with the divine right of bishops, and with apostolic succession, but with the life of God in the Church, the Body of Christ, and in the human soul. John Wesley, like his parents, acknowledged the immense debt of English religion to George Herbert, to Jeremy Taylor and Isaac Ambrose, to bishops like Beveridge, Pearson, and Bull. Largely represented too in proportion to their number are the Cambridge Platonists, while there are important selections from both Latitudinarian and Dissenting divines.

The notion that this inherited tradition was the primary influence and source for Wesley's doctrine of perfection, as noted in an earlier chapter, cannot be dismissed out of hand. Nevertheless, it is not within the purpose or scope of this writing to widely explore Anglican writings in an attempt to unearth some substance for the contention. At the same time, some investigation is needed in terms of the Anglican Divines that Wesley himself references.

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54 This chapter is concerned primarily with Wesley's interaction with the Patristic renaissance with the Church of England. However, as a point of distinction, it is noted "There is now growing evidence that there was a considerable body of Evangelical ministers within the Church of England in the eighteenth century…It is of some importance to distinguish the Anglican and loyal Evangelicals from the Wesleyan...Methodists. It is clear that the Anglican Evangelicals…strongly disliked some of the Methodist practices, while approving the Methodist stress on conversion and experience and a life in which one of the most evident fruits of the spirit was charity of the practical kind….A further difference between the Evangelical Anglican clergy and the Methodists was the suspicion on the part of the former of the doctrine of Christian perfection, and their preference for a moderate Calvinism as contrasted with Wesley's Arminianism." Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England from Watts and Wesley to Maurice, 1690-1850*, (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961, 214-216.


It is worth noting that the position of Anglicanism is often described as a *Via Media*, a sort of middle road that equally removes it from Roman Catholicism and popular Protestantism. Anglicanism is not founded upon any compromise but upon a single principle, and this principle is the retention of everything scriptural and primitive and the rejection of everything medieval which was inconsistent with primitive Christianity. To this single principle John Wesley could provide his adherence, while at the same time eventually including experience as part of his theological methodology. With that being said, and with Wesley's lifetime commitment to the Church of England, to what degree may he have been influenced by those Anglican writers to whom he gives credit? 

A. Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626).

According to Raymond Chapman "the genius of Andrewes was to combine learning and devotion in powerful teaching of the faith and its practical implications." To this purpose Wesley was undoubtedly drawn. Andrewes' assignment in his era was the establishment of the catholic identity of Anglicanism in relation to Roman Catholicism. Vital to his theological method is the supremacy of Scripture, the interpretation of which rested on an appeal to antiquity. He "was deeply immersed in patristic theology, which he preached to his contemporaries and through them to all the following generations." He owned copies of the

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58 The scope of this work does not allow for a review of all the writers Wesley referenced, but only a sampling of these.
liturgies of St. Basil and St. John Chrysostom. The testimony of the undivided Church was basic to Andrewes theological method, not only in his interpretation of Scripture but also in matters of doctrine, liturgy and canonical matters, the dogmatic decisions of the first four General Councils providing the foundation. Yet, John Wesley's only reference to Andrewes appears in the transcript of a conversation between Wesley's grandfather and the then Bishop of Bristol, in which the senior Wesley simply affirms Andrewes understanding of worship. This is an interesting connection, given Andrewes considered theological foundation which he framed as "One canon reduced to writing by God himself, two testaments, three creeds, four general councils, five centuries, and the series of Fathers in that period...determine the boundary of our faith," and that Andrewes regarded the Church of England as belonging to the Church universal and its history beginning from Jerusalem. In his *Preces Privatae* he drew inspiration and much content from the Eastern as well as the Western Church...," and it would appear, "his private devotions (were) decisively shaped by the heritage of the Greek Fathers." Andrewes' sermon on *The Holy Spirit*, delivered before James I on Whitsunday, 31 May 1612, exemplifies the deep importance of the Holy Spirit in his theology. In the sermon Andrewes appeals to Athanasius and St. Basil of Caesarea to bolster his authority. In this same sermon Andrewes speaks of partaking of the Divine nature.

"Then, why have 'you received the Holy Ghost?' No receiving will serve, but of Him? The reason is, it is nothing here below that we seek, but to heaven we aspire. Then, if to heaven we shall, something from heaven must thither exalt

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us. If 'partakers of the Divine nature' we hope to be, as great and precious promises we have that we shall be, that can be no otherwise than by receiving One in whom the Divine nature is. He being received imparts it to us, and makes us 'partakers of the divine nature' and that is the Holy Ghost. For as an absolute necessity there is that we receive the Spirit, else can we not live the life of nature, so no less absolute that we receive the Holy Spirit, else can we not live the life of grace, and so consequently never come to the life of glory. 67

What Andrewes seems to be saying here and in other sermons is that although there is a measure of empowerment from the Holy Spirit to live "the life of grace," nevertheless complete perfection is something that is still awaiting the Christian after this life in heaven. Such a view does not contradict Wesley's emphasis on holiness of life, but it does not appear to represent a theology of entire sanctification that Wesley would articulate. However, from both a foundational and source perspective Andrewes and Wesley concurred, yet Wesley rarely offered a glance in Andrewes' direction.

Wesley's cursory glance toward Andrewes is also mystifying because one of Andrewes' favorite themes was "theosis," that is, humanity becomes like God as the consequence and completion of the doctrine of the Incarnation and through participation in the Eucharist.

Pneumatology…is not a prominent feature of the theology in his time. Andrewes was notable for his Whitsun preaching, here again influenced by patristic thought. He saw the need to declare the importance of the Holy Spirit, in danger of being diminished by the concentration of many contemporary preachers on Christ alone, to the detriment of Trinitarian doctrine. At the same time, he needed to counter the excesses of some extremists who claimed special power from the Holy Spirit to justify and exalt their private judgement. His position was that the work of Christ and of the Holy Spirit are inseparable, leading the believer towards theosis. 68

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67 Ibid. 50.
68 Chapman, 10.
In a sermon for Pentecost, Andrewes demonstrates no hesitation in articulating his thoughts on "theosis," as he speaks of the mysteries of Christ's incarnation and our inspiration with the Holy Spirit.⁶⁹

In the former by the union of his Son; in the latter by the communion of his blessed Spirit… without either of them we are not complete, we have not our accomplishment; but by both of them we have, and that fully, even by this day's royal exchange. Whereby, as before he of ours, so now we of his are made partakers. He clothed with our flesh, and we invested with his Spirit. The great promise of the Old Testament accomplished, that he should partake our human nature; and the great and precious promise of the New, that we should be consortes divinae naturae, 'partakers of his divine nature,' both are this day accomplished.⁷⁰…to be made partakers of the Spirit, is to be made partakers 'of the divine nature'… Partakers of the Spirit we are, by receiving grace;…The state of grace is the perfection of this life, to grow still from grace to grace, to profit in it. As to go on still forward is the perfection of a traveler, to draw still nearer and nearer to his journey's end.⁷¹

Unlike Wesley, Andrewes was careful to keep the nexus between the Eucharist and theosis as central to his teaching on the subject.

Now 'the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body, of the flesh, of Jesus Christ?' It is surely, and by it and by nothing more are we made partakers of this blessed union…. Because He hath so done, taken ours of us, we also ensuing His steps will participate with Him and with his flesh which He hath taken of us. It is most kindly to take part with Him in that which He took part in with us, and that, to no other end, but that He might make the receiving of it by us a means whereby He might 'dwell in us, and we in Him.'⁷²

Although Wesley would have resonated with Andrewes linkage of perfection, grace, and growth in grace, he would have recoiled from the strong Eucharistic symbiosis. Lossky affirms that the underlying biblical foundation for theosis or deification emerges from 2 Peter 1:4, which was the favorite biblical quotation of Lancelot Andrewes, and that "there are adaptations

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⁶⁹ Middleton, Fathers and Anglicans, 128.
of it in several of Charles Wesley's hymns."\textsuperscript{73} Despite this observation, the evidence suggesting a direct connection between John Wesley and Andrewes remains, in my opinion, inconclusive.

B. Richard Hooker (1554-1600)

Richard Hooker, according to most Anglican scholars, "has long been considered one of the premier apologists of Anglicanism."\textsuperscript{74} Additionally, what set Hooker apart in his time is the fact that he "represents the philosophical origin of a religious position—anti-Calvinist, ultra-conformist, traditionalist rather than scripturalist…"\textsuperscript{75} Hooker, along with other Anglicans, "wanted to revive the purity of the primitive church freed from what they saw as the corruptions of medieval Catholicism."\textsuperscript{76} Although this description could be argued, it nevertheless, contextualizes Hooker's mindset and approach to theology at this time.

…Hooker's use of the Fathers, which, while not a creation of the seventeenth century, became during this century an integral part of the Anglican approach to theological questions. This appeal to antiquity was not simply a search for guarantors of some specific teaching and practice. In addition to establishing an identity of doctrine with the early period, the concern was to discover what kind of church existed in the first three centuries and to show a resemblance between it and the contemporary church.\textsuperscript{77}

"Hooker sets patristic scholarship on a new level and, one might argue, forces an abandonment of the Fathers as a source for the Puritans while establishing it as a bulwark in the Anglican defense."\textsuperscript{78} In spite of this high praise, Wesley's use of Hooker, like that of Andrewes, is muted

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\textsuperscript{73} Lossky, "Lancelot Andrewes," 154.
\textsuperscript{74} David Cressy and Lori Anne Ferrell, \textit{Religion and Society in Early Modern England}, (New York, NY: Routlege, 2005), 141.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{76} Geordan Hammond, "High Church Anglican Influences on John Wesley's Conception of Primitive Christianity, 1732-1735," 181. "Anglican divines looked to the history of the early church and interpreted it as a "chain of testimony" that could be applied to present concerns. Orthodoxy became synonymous with the primate church …" (Ibid, 182).
\textsuperscript{77} Arthur Middleton, \textit{Fathers and Anglicans}, 94.
at best and essentially silent at worst. His single reference to Hooker in his *Works* is a back-handed compliment in the midst of Wesley's defense of his "enthusiasm" and use of directional foci that strike his critics as inappropriate. In Wesley's words,

> I come now to what you expatiate upon at large, as the two grand instances of my enthusiasm. The first is plainly this: At some rare times, when I have been in great distress of soul, or in utter uncertainty how to act in an important case which required a speedy determination, after using all other means that occurred, I have cast lots, or opened the bible. And by this means I have been relieved from that distress, or directed in that uncertainty.... But you ask, "Has God ever commanded us to do thus?" I believe he has neither commanded nor forbidden it in Scripture. But then remember, "that Scripture" (to use the words which you cite from "our learned and judicious Hooker") "is not the only rule of all things, which, in this life, may be done by men." All I affirm concerning this is that it may be done; and that I have, in fact, received assistance and direction thereby.

For Hooker tradition was not an inviolate compendium of truths which served as a rival to revealed doctrine. Tradition is a body of ordinances established by the authority which Christ gave the church in things indifferent. In Hooker's thought, these ordinances were binding until the church had cause to change them.

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79 According to Luoma, Hooker draws more heavily from the Latin Fathers than the Greek Fathers, which may explain Wesley's reticence to reference Hooker. Ibid, note 35, 51. Later in the same article he writes, "Hooker displays roughly the same dependence on the Latin Fathers over the Greeks," yet in his notes indicates that Hooker cited the Latin Fathers some 234 times, while referencing the Greek Fathers less than half that amount, and of those the primary dependence lies with Chrysostom (cited twenty-two times) and Gregory Nazianzus (cited seventeen times), Ibid, 57.

80 Wesley, "The Principles of a Methodist Farther Explained: Occasioned by The Rev. Mr. Church's Second Letter to Mr. Wesley, *Works*, 8, 449-50. It is noted that in 1750 Wesley published a 50 volume set of books entitled "A Christian Library: Extracts from and Abridgments of the Choicest Pieces of Practical Divinity which Have Been Published in the English Tongue." In this collection of writings Wesley essentially ignores the Church Fathers, with the exception of the Apostolic Fathers and Macarius, the medieval scholastics, and the reformers. Instead, Wesley focuses on recent centuries, English works, including Puritans and established churchmen. The original 50 volumes have been compressed into 30 volumes, and in volume 15 of the latter, under the rubric of the "Lives of Eminent Christians," Wesley includes "The Life of Richard Hooker." In this brief account he speaks of Hooker as one "that God seemed to single...out as a special instrument of his glory," and as a man who demonstrated "an awful reverence of that God whom he then worshipped; giving all outward testimonies that his affections were set on heavenly things." Wesley allows a line regarding Hooker's Eight Books on the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, but suggests that although their contents are worthy they are "on the Power of the Church to make canons for the use of ceremonies..." Wesley offers only one hint of Hooker's connection to primitive Christianity when he indicates "he walked with God, and thus he did tread in the footsteps of primitive piety," John Wesley, "A Christian Library," in 30 volumes, "The Life of Richard Hooker," Volume 15; accessed from The Wesley Center Online, www.wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/a-christian-library/a-christian-library-volume-15, March 6, 2013.
Lest therefore the name of tradition should be offensive to any, considering how far by some it hath been and is abused, we mean by traditions, ordinances made in the prime of Christian religion, established with that authority which Christ hath left to his Church for matters indifferent, and in that consideration requisite to be observed, till like authority see just and reasonable cause to alter them. So that traditions ecclesiastical are not rudely and in gross to be shaken off, because the inventors of them were men.  

Hooker's view of consensus allowed for the use of the Fathers where it is grounded in, or is not against, scripture. Whether it was a matter of doctrine or discipline, for Hooker, "Be it in matter of the one kind or of the other, what Scripture doth plainly deliver, to that the first place both of credit and obedience is due; the next whereunto is whatsoever any man can necessarily conclude by force of reason; after these the voice of the Church succeedeth." Whether consciously or not, Wesley articulated in part the use of tradition and Christian reason in his decision making process, a practice that Hooker certainly encouraged and defended. Further, although Wesley's silence on Hooker in his writings is remarkable, nevertheless Wesley by his own theological methodology followed the guidance of Hooker. Pinnington describes that guidance in this way:

…Hooker was able to use the Fathers, 'not only where the consensus is grounded in Scripture in matters of doctrine and discipline, but also where it is not against Scripture in matters of doctrine and discipline' so as to find a legitimate place for reason in all ages of the Church. In so doing he tended to appropriate a 'patristic mind,' incarnational and Eucharistic and extending as far as theosis (or, as he and his successors would have preferred to say, 'participation.')

82 Hooker, Ibid, V, iii, 2, 2, 34.  
83 Although not mentioning Hooker, Wesley nevertheless affirms his appreciation of reason and Scripture, when he writes, "The English writers, such as Bishop Beveridge, Bishop Taylor, and Mr. Nelson, a little relieved me from these well-meaning, wrong-headed Germans. Their accounts of Christianity I could easily see to be, in the main, consistent both with reason and Scripture." Works, BCE, 18, Journal 1, January 24-31, 1738, 212.  
84 Pinnington, Ibid, 37.
Not only did Wesley imbibe the spirit of consensus,\textsuperscript{85} he was drawn to the theology of theosis, although he preferred the nomenclature of perfection, sanctification, participation and holiness.\textsuperscript{86} Yet, as Frank Baker acknowledges of Wesley's writing, "it is somewhat strange how the influence of Hooker…and others appears to be so obvious an element in his thought without it being possible to give chapter and verse for his study or even passion of their writings."\textsuperscript{87} He does suggest that although there is no evidence that Wesley "seriously studied Hooker's \textit{Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity} before his ordination as deacon in 1725,…some acquaintance before that date is almost certain from the way in which it is commended in his father's \textit{Advice to a Young Clergyman}, by which Wesley was directing his own…studies."\textsuperscript{88} Yet the subject of participation (theosis) is, "at first sight, not a prominent theme in Hooker's work. "\textsuperscript{89} In fact, Hooker avoids the explicit language of theosis in his works, although, according to Allchin, "…it does not escape our attention that when he speaks of Christ 'making us such as himself is' he affirms the underlying mystery which the word expresses."\textsuperscript{90} Indeed, if we are looking for vital terms in Hooker's theological nomenclature, "we shall find them in terms such as mutual participation and conjunction, coinherence and perichoresis. God is in Christ; Christ is in us; we are in him."\textsuperscript{91}

\textsuperscript{85} Wesley, in his Journal of January 25, 1738, and in the midst of his sharp critique of the mystic writers, who he identifies as the most dangerous enemies of Christianity, and German Lutherans and Calvinists as those who propagated error, adds "But it was not long before Providence brought me to those who showed me a sure rule for interpreting Scripture, viz., \textit{consensus veterum}—'quod ab omnibus, quod ubique, quod simper creditum.' \textit{Works}, BCE, Ibid, 212-3.
\textsuperscript{86} "There is little doubt…that the Patristic doctrine of participation…is vital to a true understanding of much late sixteenth and early seventeenth century Anglican divinity." Edmund Newey, "The Form of Reason: Participation in the Work of Richard Hooker, Benjamin Whichcote, Ralph Cudworth and Jeremy Taylor," \textit{Modern Theology}, 18:1, January 2002, 3 [3-26].
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid, 15.
\textsuperscript{89} Newey, Ibid, 5.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid, 96.
In the Fifth Book of his Works Hooker offers a series of definitions of participation which demonstrate clearly that his understanding of participation in God goes beyond the notion of simply ideas and includes participation in being.

For as our natural life consisteth in the union of the body with the soul; so our life supernatural in the union of the soul with God. And forasmuch as there is no union of God with man without that mean between both which is both, it seemeth requisite that we first consider how God is in Christ, then how Christ is in us, and how the Sacraments do serve to make us partakers of Christ.  

Hooker continues in his discourse to focus on the incarnation of Christ and in so doing, declares emphatically, contrary to Wesley, that no person in this life is able to reach to the "perfection of love."

We have hitherto spoken of the Person and of the presence of Christ. Participation is that mutual inward hold which Christ hath of us and we of him, in such sort that each possesseth other by way of special interest, property, and inherent copulation…. It followeth hereupon that the Son of God…. [in] His Incarnation causeth him also as man to be now in the Father, and the Father to be in him. For in that he is man, he receiveth life from the Father as from the fountain of that ever living Deity, which in the person of the Word hath combined itself with manhood, and doth thereunto impart such life as to no other creature besides him is communicated. In which consideration likewise the love of the Father towards him is more than it can be towards any other, neither can any attain unto *that perfection of love* [emphasis mine] which he beareth towards his heavenly Father.

Wesley, although he wavered at times, considered "the perfection of love" for God to be attainable within one's lifetime. However, although he and Hooker diverged on this fine point of participation, they both agreed that perfection, at whatever level it is reached in this life, is a gradual process most often, and only occurs as it is assisted by God's grace.

Thus much no Christian man will deny, that when Christ sanctified his own flesh, giving as God and taking as man the Holy Ghost, he did not this for himself only but for our sakes, that the grace of sanctification and life which

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92 Hooker, Ibid, V, li, 3, 278. 2, 278. As before, Hooker speaks of participation in the context of the Sacraments, which Wesley would not have affirmed with such emphasis.

93 Hooker, Ibid, V, lvi, 1,2 & 4, 2, 303-305.
was first received in him might pass from him to his whole race… Howbeit, because the work of his Spirit to those effects is in us prevented by sin and death possessing us before, it is of necessity that as well our present sanctification unto newness of life, as the future restoration of our bodies should presuppose a participation of the grace…of his body and blood…. So that Christ imparteth plainly himself by degrees…. But the participation of Christ imparteth…a true actual influence of grace…

In Hooker’s theology "Because our participation is actual and effective, it cannot be an instantaneous process…our incorporation into Christ at baptism is by imputed grace, whose effect is immediate, whilst infused grace is the means of our gradual growth into the life of God throughout our lives…”

Hooker emphasizes a participation in Deity that at one level is the property of all humanity. He insists that God dwells in all people and they all dwell in him. For Hooker, God's indwelling in humanity occurs through the goodness of the Father, the Wisdom of the Son, and the power of the Holy Spirit. Hooker suggests "that all things which God hath made are…in him [original emphasis] as effects in their highest cause, he likewise actually is in them, the assistance and influence of his Deity is their life." Wesley would echo the underlying goodness within the heart of humanity—as a remnant of the marred image of God in Adam—but would shy away from descriptors of such that would suggest divinity within the heart of a not yet Christian person. Having established divine participation within all of humanity as a result of creation, Hooker is careful then to speak of divine participation among those who have entered into God's salvation, not simply his creation.

For his Church he knoweth and loveth, so that they which are in the Church are thereby known to be in him. Our being in Christ by eternal foreknowledge saveth us not without our actual and real adoption into the fellowship of his

94 Hooker, Ibid, V, lvi, 10, 2, 252-3.
95 Newey, 7.
97 Hooker, Ibid.
saints in this present world. For in him we actually are by our actual incorporation into that society which hath him for their Head, and doth make together with him one Body, (he and they in that respect having one name,) for which cause, by virtue of this mystical conjunction, we are of him and in him even as though our very flesh and bones should be made continuatie with his. We are in Christ because he knoweth and loveth us even as parts of himself.98

Hooker's strong ecclesiastical linkage to "participation with the Divine" would not be affirmed by Wesley. Although Wesley was a firm believer in the Church of England, his departure from Hooker occurred with his emphasis on individual conversion rather than on corporate adoption. Further, Hooker clearly identifies the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Baptism to the efficacy of divine participation in the Christian. In writing about the value of the Sacraments, Hooker declares:

But their chiefest force and virtue consisteth not herein so much as in that they are heavenly ceremonies, which God hath sanctified and ordained to be administered in his Church, first, as marks whereby to know when God doth impart the vital or saving grace of Christ unto all that are capable thereof, and secondly as means conditional which God requireth in them unto whom he imparteth grace…. Seeing therefore that grace is a consequent of sacraments, a thing which accompanieth them as their end, a benefit which he that hath receiveth from God himself the author of sacraments, and not from any other natural or supernatural quality in them, it may be hereby…understood that sacraments are necessary…to life supernatural.99

Wesley's emphasis on the Holy Spirit would not allow him to infuse the Sacraments with such influence. Although he regarded sacramental liturgy highly, his tendency was to demystify them in terms of practical or enabling grace. He viewed them as critical to liturgy, but not to sanctification per se.

It is interesting to note (as will be clearly demonstrated in chapter 5) that although Wesley at times allowed for two levels of Christians and thus two demonstrations of holiness, (one of course, being vastly inferior to the second and perfect holiness he contended for),

98 Hooker, Ibid, V, Ivi, 7, 249.
nevertheless such a position does link hands with Hooker's embrace of the universal divine presence in all humanity as a result of creation. What Wesley seems to have accomplished in his theology is to move the universal category of Hooker into the initial category of, for lack of a better term, a first level Christian. Still, within especially chapters 55 and 56 of the fifth book of the Laws, one can discern further differences and similarities with Wesley's views on salvation and perfection. It was Hooker's conviction is that salvation comes through Jesus Christ, that such is not merited, yet at the moment of justification the gift of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit is received and ongoing sanctification commences. Further, like Wesley he uses therapeutic language to express the salvation of Christ.

God in Christ is generally the medicine which doth cure the world, and Christ in us is that receipt of the same medicine, whereby we are every one particularly cured, inasmuch as Christ's incarnation and passion can be available to no man's good which is not made partaker of Christ, neither can we participate in him without his presence…

It is certain that Wesley affirmed in spirit and theology Hooker's description of the impact of the gift of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian. According to Hooker,

…the gift of the Holy Ghost, which they that are his receive from him….may yield, yea by steps and degrees they receive the complete measure of all such divine grace, as doth sanctify and save throughout, till the day of their final exaltation to a state of fellowship in glory, with him whose partakers they are now in those things that tend to glory.

Although it is not possible in this work to probe further into the works of Hooker, it does seem apparent to this author that remnants of Hooker's incarnational and pneumatological theology do appear in Wesley, although without attribution. The language of perfection in love, the primary role of the Holy Spirit in sanctification, and even the degrees of holiness within a

\[100\] Hooker, Ibid, V, lv, 1, 2, 238, 101 Hooker, Ibid, V, lvi, 13, 255.\]
Christian and the timing of such—all appear to reflect well on both Hooker and Wesley and as a result place Wesley more in Hooker's debt than Wesley himself would credit.

C. Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667)

A generation before Wesley Jeremy Taylor anticipated Wesley's concern for holy living. "Taylor has been faulted for straying from Hooker's understanding of justification and sanctification, but if he did, it was in large part because (of his) concern…that intellect, or correct doctrine, was being emphasized while the affection, and thus the modification of human behavior was being neglected or ignored." Taylor, like Wesley, "was concerned for changed lives, for repentance, for holy living and holy dying." This affinity may explain Wesley's multiple references to Taylor, not only in his Works, but also in A Christian Library.

The presence of Taylor's works in Wesley's library demonstrates that Wesley overcame his initial fears regarding Taylor's Rules and Exercises on Holy Living. In June of 1725, Wesley expressed deep agitation regarding some of Taylor's premises to the point that he wondered, upon reading them, if anyone could be saved.

I have heard one I take to be a person of good judgment say, that she would advise no one very young to read Dr. Taylor on Holy Living and Dying. She added, that he almost put her out of her senses when she was fifteen or sixteen years old; because he seemed to exclude all from being in a way of salvation who did not come up to his rules, some of which are altogether impracticable. A fear of being tedious will make me confine myself to one or two instances…though several others might be produced of almost equal consequence…. In reference to humility, the Bishop says, "We must be sure, in some sense or other, to think ourselves the worst in every company where we come." And in treating of repentance he says, "Whether God has forgiven us or no, we know not; therefore be sorrowful for ever having sinned."…If we can never have any certainty of our being in a state of salvation…every moment should be spent, not in joy, but in fear and trembling; and then…we are of all men most miserable. God deliver us from such a fearful expectation as this!

103 Ibid.
Humility is undoubtedly necessary to salvation; and if all these things are essential to humility, who can be humble, who can be saved? The assurance of salvation, even early in his ministry life, was to evolve into a primary emphasis in Wesley's writings, and it is apparent that he took umbrage against Taylor regarding this matter and what Wesley considered, at least at this juncture, an overwhelming emphasis upon rules of spiritual law. It does appear however that Wesley's opinion on this matter softened, in that he included in *A Christian Library* extracts of Taylor's Rules that covered both his diatribe on humility and repentance.

In Wesley's reference to Taylor in his Journal from 1765, as he defends his doctrine of perfection he speaks to the immense impact Taylor had on his life through his *Rules of Holy Living and Dying*.

…the main point between you and me is Perfection.... "But how came this opinion into my mind? I will tell you with all simplicity. In 1725 I met with Bishop Taylor's 'Rules of Holy Living and Dying.' I was struck particularly with the chapter upon intention, [original emphasis] and felt a fixed intention 'to give myself up to God.' In this I was much confirmed soon after by the 'Christian Pattern,' and longed to give God all my heart. This is just what I mean by Perfection now: I sought after it from that hour.

In his exposition of the Apostles' Creed Taylor affirmed the work done in a person's life as accomplished by the Holy Spirit. "He it is who enlightens our understandings, sanctifies our will, orders and commands our affections.... This holy Spirit God gives to some more, to some

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104 Wesley, "Letter to his Mother, June 18, 1725," *Works*, XII, 8-9.
less, according as they are capable.\textsuperscript{107} At times, Taylor's language comes close to anticipating Wesley's words on the doctrine of perfection.

For the Spirit of God is…the spirit of regeneration in baptism, of renovation in repentance; the spirit of love and the spirit of holy fear; the searcher of the hearts and the spirit of discerning…. In one mystery He illuminates and in another He feeds us; He begins in one and finishes and perfects in another…. He is the beginning and the progression, the consummation and perfection of us all; and yet every work of His is perfect in its kind and in order to his own designation, and from the beginning to the end is perfection all the way.\textsuperscript{108}

Taylor's apparent delimitization of perfection does not fit into Wesley's scheme, but the allowance for perfection at all would have been embraced by Wesley. At the same time, in Taylor's sixth sermon, "Via Intelligentiae," based on the text of John 7:17, he highlights as a dominant point the importance of holiness of life, the wisdom provided by the Holy Spirit, and the teaching of the Holy Spirit that allows the Christian to "know and love God, and become like to Him."\textsuperscript{109} In the same sermon he turns to Chrysostom, Saint Basil, Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa and Ephrem the great Syrian as examples of those who lived in the power of the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{110}

It was in fact the influence of Taylor in his \textit{Rules for Holy Living and Dying} that Wesley was convicted of keeping "a more exact account than I had done before, of the manner wherein I spent my time, writing down how I had employed ever hour."\textsuperscript{111} Wesley does offer a beneficent endorsement and summary of Taylor's \textit{Rules} in his sermon "On Dissipation."

It is with great judgment, therefore, that great and good Bishop Taylor, in his "Rules of Holy Living and Dying," (of whom Bishop Warburton, a person not very prone to commend, used to say, "I have no conception of a greater genius on earth than Dr. Jeremy Taylor,"”) premises to all his other rules those

\textsuperscript{108}Jeremy Taylor, "A Discourse of Confirmation," Ibid. 254-5.
\textsuperscript{110}Ibid., 387.
concerning purity of intention. And has he not the authority of our Lord himself so to do? Who puts it down as an universal maxim, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Singly aim at God. In every step thou takest, eye Him alone. Pursue one thing: Happiness in knowing, in loving, in serving God. Then shall thy soul be full of light: Full of the light of the glory of God; of his glorious love, shining upon thee from the face of Jesus Christ. Can anything be a greater help to universal holiness, [emphasis mine] than the continually seeing the light of his glory? 112

Wesley goes further in his affirmations of Taylor and in his acknowledged "source" for the doctrine of perfection, by indicating in "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection" that in fact it was Taylor's writings that formed a very early step in Wesley's journey to this doctrine.

What I purpose in the following papers is, to give a plain and distinct account of the steps by which I was led, during a course of many years, to embrace the doctrine of Christian perfection… In the year 1725, being in the twenty-third of my age, I met with bishop Taylor's "Rule and Exercises of Holy Living and Dying." In reading several parts of this book, I was exceedingly affected; that part in particular which relates to purity of intention. Instantly I resolved to dedicate all my life to God, all my thoughts, and words, and actions; being thoroughly convinced, there was no medium; but that every part of my life (not some only) must either be a sacrifice to God, or myself, that is, in effect, to the

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112 Wesley, "Sermon LXXIX, On Dissipation," Works, VI, 450. The section of Taylor's work that Wesley appropriates and summarizes comes from the opening paragraph of Section 2 (as contained in the extracted form in Wesley's Christian Library): "The second general instrument of holy Living, Purity of Intention." The words of Taylor that undoubtedly resonated with Wesley are, "Blessed be that goodness and grace of God, which, out of infinite desire to glorify mankind, would make the very works of nature capable of becoming acts of virtue, that all our lifetime we may do him service. This grace is so excellent, that it sanctifies [my emphasis] the most common action of our life; and yet, so necessary, that without it the very best actions of our devotion are vicious… But a holy end sanctifies [my emphasis] all these and all other actions which can be made holy [my emphasis]… Holy intention is to the actions of a man that which the soul is to the body, or the root to the tree, or the sun to the world; for without these the body is a dead trunk, the tree is a block, the world is darkness, and the action is sinful." Again, Wesley is unusually complimentary of Taylor in his sermon "On a Single Eye," "'Simplicity and purity,' says a devout man, "are the two wings that lift the soul up to heaven: Simplicity, which is in the intention; and purity, which is in the affections." The former of these, that great and good man, Bishop Taylor, recommends with much earnestness, in the beginning of his excellent book, "Rules of Holy Living and Dying." He sets out with insisting upon this, as the very first point in true religion, and warns us, that, without this, all our endeavours after it will be vain and ineffectual. (Wesley, "Sermon CXVIII, "On a Single Eye," Works, VII, 297). Wesley is not universally kind to Taylor. In his sermon "On Redeeming the Time," he addresses the amount of sleep necessary for different individuals, concluding in fact, that one standard measure of sleep for all people is incorrect. At that juncture he writes, "One would wonder, therefore, that so great a man as Bishop Taylor should have formed this strange imagination; much more, that the measure which he has assigned for the general standard should be only three hours in four and-twenty." (Wesley, "Sermon XCIII, "On Redeeming the Time," Works, VII, 68).
devil. Can any serious person doubt of this, or find a medium between serving God and serving the devil?\textsuperscript{113}

Although Wesley credits Taylor with the first steps toward a doctrine of perfection, given the reality that at least a facsimile of perfective language was part of the corpus of Taylor's works, it is more accurate to say that Taylor's language of devotion and dedication greatly impacted Wesley and certainly played a role in his theological formation in terms of perfection, but can only be viewed by Wesley in hindsight and review as directing him towards his more fully developed view of Christian perfection. The most that can be said of Taylor's flirtation with the doctrine of perfection, is that he approaches the subject with some hesitation.

(Taylor) follows implicitly the Patristic assimilation of \textit{huiopoiesis} and \textit{theosis}, found in...Hooker..., yet he uses neither Greek term, nor any of their customary English translations, but rather seeks to point towards them as the final mysterious goal and consummation of the Christian life. \textit{Theosis} is something "to be felt and not to be talked of;... All that I may now say is, that a good man is united unto God as a flame touches a flame, and combines into splendor and to glory; so is the Spirit of a man united unto Christ by the Spirit of God."

I would allow that it is apparent, by the sheer number of references to Taylor that Wesley drank deeply from his pen because of Taylor's obvious emphasis on holiness and sanctification. Moreover, Taylor was manifestly concerned with practical divinity, as opposed to speculative theology. McAdoo observes that Taylor's books "have the sustained emphasis on the practical and devotional to be expected from a writer who regarded practical divinity as one the mainstays of 'the life of religion.' They relate in a positive way the inward aspects of membership in the Church to the outward aspects of relationships in society."\textsuperscript{115}

\textsuperscript{113} Wesley, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection," \textit{Works}, XI, 366. Wesley's tome represents his thoughts on the subject from 1725 to 1777.


\textsuperscript{115} McAdoo, \textit{The Spirit of Anglicanism}, 54.
D. John Tillotson (1630-1694), George Bull (1634-1710), and William Beveridge (1632-1708)

Wesley includes some of Tillotson's Works in his "A Christian Library," specifically Tillotson's sermon "Of the Ordinary Influence of the Holy Ghost on the Minds of Christians." There is nothing remarkable in Tillotson's treatise on the influence of the Spirit as it betrays a common understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit within the Church of England. There is some word about assurance of salvation, but there is no language of theosis, perfection or sanctification, although the latter is certainly affirmed in other nomenclature. It may have been Wesley's intent to include such a work so as to assure those within his circles of influence that the foundational base of his pneumatology was sound and orthodox.

Tillotson's broader work, particularly his sermons, do in fact demonstrate a pneumatological emphasis. Presumably, Wesley was familiar with all of them, but at no point does he directly admit to such. One is left to judge the tone and intention of Tillotson's pneumatology in terms of its osmosis into the theology of Wesley.

Throughout his sermons, Tillotson, like Wesley, places a strong emphasis on obedience to the commands of Christ and the Word of God. This obedience is nothing more than practical divinity, a life of virtue, or holiness of life, as Tillotson explains.

And as the knowledge of God is excellent, so likewise of our Duty; which is nothing else but virtue, and goodness, and holiness, which are the image of God, a conformity to the nature and will of God and an imitation of the Divine Excellencies and Perfections, so far as we are capable: For to know our duty, is to know what it is to be like God in goodness, and pity, and patience, and clemency, in pardoning injuries, and passing by provocations, in justice and righteousness, in truth and faithfulness, and in a hatred...of the contrary of this. In a word, it is to know what is the good and acceptable will of God, what it is

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that he loves and delights in, and is pleased withal, and would have us to do in order to our perfection and our happiness.\footnote{117}{John Tillotson, "Sermon 1, Job xxviii. 28," in \textit{Sermons Preach'd upon Several Occasions by John Tillotson}, (London, UK: Printed for Ed. Gellibrand, The First Volume, 1678), 11-12.}

Within this single paragraph can be heard hints of the yet future Wesley. Tillotson speaks of the life of holiness as that of virtue, which reflects positively the image of God in humanity and which also reflects, at least to some degree, the perfection of God. To this Wesley would offer little resistance, any more than he would object to Tillotson's personal challenge to his listeners.

I challenge any one, to instance in any real benefit that ever came to him this way. Let the sinner declare what he hath found by experience. Hath lewdness and intemperance been more for his health, than if he had liv'd chastely and soberly? Hath falsehood and justice prov'd at the long run, more for the advancement and security of his estate, than truth and honesty would have done? Hath any vice that he hath lived in, made him more true friends, and gain'd him a better reputation in the world, than the practice of holiness and virtue would have done?\footnote{118}{Tillotson, "Sermon 120, Psalm xix. 11," Ibid, 171-172.}

The expected and given answer is "no," a negative to which Wesley would easily have affirmed. Further, Tillotson, while discussing perfection and the reasonableness of the laws of Christianity, defines such under two headings. "They are either such as tend to the perfection of human nature, and to make men finely and personally good; or such as tend to the peace and happiness of humane society."\footnote{119}{Tillotson, "Sermon 177, Phil. l.ii. 8," Ibid, 187.} Certainly Wesley's doctrine of perfection were intended to convert or change a person's heart so that they would be transformed in terms of sin in their life, but also that they would be transformed in terms of outlook and service—moving outward from themselves to assist with community and cultural needs. Finally, in terms of Tillotson, it is intriguing to read of his all-encompassing understanding of faith. For him faith cannot be simply addressed as justifying faith, or Saving faith, or even sanctifying faith, as if each was a
self-contained and independent unit. "That this Faith of the Gospel, which I have described, is
truly and properly a Sanctifying, and Justifying, and Saving Faith." He then adds
completeness to his brief exclamation.

It is truly Sanctifying. I know that this term of a Sanctifying Faith, is not much
in use among Divines, and therefore it may seem a little more strange: but they
might have used it if they had pleased, for it is every whit as proper to call Faith
sanctifying, as justifying or saving…. Our hearts are said to be purified by
Faith. And so likewise, our victory over the world, that is, our conquering and
subduing of our covetous, and ambitious, and sensual lusts and desires, are in a
peculiar manner ascribed to this Faith which I have described.

Tillotson's synergistic approach to justification, salvation and sanctification prefaces Wesley's
approach to the same, while at the same time, echoes the Eastern and Greek Fathers.

Having said that, it is somewhat incongruous that Wesley, in writing to the readers of
his Library and as a preface to Tillotson's work on the Holy Spirit, offers a rather benign
comment about the Archbishop.

I have the rather inserted the following Extracts for the sake of two sorts of
people,--those who are unreasonably prejudiced for, and those who are
unreasonably prejudiced against, this great man. By this small specimen it will
abundantly appear, to all who will at length give themselves leave to judge
imartially, that the Archbishop was as far from being the worst, as from being
the best, of the English writers.

One is left wondering what Wesley's true impression is of the Archbishop, if indeed this was
his only pejorative comment. As early as 1741 in his sermon "True Christianity Defended"
Wesley makes his viewpoint clear, at least in terms of Tillotson's soteriology.

Let me, however, be as short as may be upon this head; and I will instance only
in two or three men of renown, who have endeavoured to sap the very
foundation of our Church, by attacking its fundamental, and, indeed, the
fundamental doctrine of all Reformed Churches; viz., justification by faith

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121 Tillotson, Ibid, 228-229.
122 Wesley, Ibid.
alone. One of these, and one of the highest station in our Church, hath written and printed, before his death, several sermons, expressly to prove, that not faith alone, [original emphasis] but good works also, are necessary in order to justification. The unpleasing task of quoting particular passages out of them is superseded by the very title of them; which is this: "The Necessity of Regeneration," (which he at large proves to imply holiness both of heart and life,) "in order to Justification."\(^{123}\)

Of all of the English Divines, it occurs to this author that Tillotson's thought may have found its way into Wesley's theology and writings. Although lacking in participation and perfection nomenclature to any degree, at the very least his limited perfective language as it connects to obedience and a life of virtue and his pneumatological views run parallel with Wesley's. Wesley's attention to the work of George Bull, like that of Hooker and Andrews, goes largely unnoticed, even though in the late seventeenth century Bull vigorously defended patristic studies.\(^{124}\) Still, none of the works of Bishop Bull are included in Wesley's Library and Wesley restricts to just four entries any mention of Bull in his Works. The earliest reference to Bull is in a letter to his brother Samuel in January, 1739, in which he castigates Bull's teaching on the Holy Spirit.

> My Dear Brother,—...I think Bishop Bull's sermon on the Witness of the Spirit (against the Witness of the Spirit it should rather be entitled) is full of gross perversions of Scripture and manifest contradictions both to Scripture and experience. I find more persons day by day who experience a clear evidence of their being in a state of salvation...But I much fear we begin our dispute at the wrong end. I fear you dissent [original emphasis] from the fundamental Articles

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\(^{123}\) Wesley, Sermon CXXXIV, "True Christianity Defended," *Works*, VII, 454. The notes in this edition of Wesley's Works identify the sermon "The Necessity of Regeneration" as that of Tillotson. Wesley goes on in the next section of this sermon to indict Bishop George Bull. As Wesley completes his railing against Tillotson, he adds, "But O, what is he in comparison of the great Bishop Bull! Who shall be able to stand, if this eminent scholar, Christian, and Prelate, in his youth wrote and published to the world, and in his riper years defended, the positions that follow? (Ibid, 455).

of the Church of England. I know Bishop Bull does. I doubt you do not hold justification by faith alone.\textsuperscript{125}

Two years later, on July 24, 1741 in which Wesley indicts Bull for his works for justification doctrine, while at the same time accusing Bull of doctrinal inconsistency on the subject of justification.

I read over, and partly transcribed, Bishop Bull's \textit{Harmonia Apostolica}. The position with which he sets out is this: "That all good works, and not faith alone, are the necessarily previous condition of justifications," or the forgiveness of our sins. But in the middle of the treatise he asserts, "That faith alone is the condition of justification:" "For faith," says he, "referred to justification, means all inward and outward good works." In the latter end, he affirms, "that there are two justifications; and that only inward and outward, the latter."\textsuperscript{126}

It is not until 1764 that Wesley offers another comment on Bull. Although brief it represents at least a nod of appreciation toward the Bishop, as Wesley, in a letter to a young Christian who appears to be setting out for ministry, recommends Bull when he offers "A little tract wrote by Bishop Bull, entitled "A Companion for Candidates for Holy Orders," was of much use to me."\textsuperscript{127} Overall, it appears that Bull's Pelagian view regarding justification was not something Wesley was prepared to overlook, thus perhaps clouding his perspective on Bull's Works as a whole.

William Beveridge fared better in Wesley's perspective, in that, although references to Beveridge in Wesley's \textit{Works} are few, Beveridge's writings capture a significant section in Wesley's library.\textsuperscript{128} Beveridge was a respected patristic scholar, who "grounded his doctrinal formulations in scripture, "consonant with right reason" and confirmed by the belief and

\textsuperscript{126} Wesley, \textit{Works}, I, 316-317.
\textsuperscript{128} Wesley includes Beveridge's \textit{Thoughts of Religion}, Articles I-XII and \textit{Thoughts of Religion}, Resolutions, Part I and II.
practice of the primitive church…. Beveridge…looked to the fathers as a standard, by which to judge their own beliefs and teachings.”

In 1672 Beveridge published a two volume work entitled *Synodikon, sive Pandectae Canonum SS. Apostolorum et Conciliorum Ecclesia Graeca Receptorum* ("Synodikon, or, Summaries of the Apostolic Canons and Councils Received in the Greek Church") in which he translated into Latin the Greek and Syriac texts of the general councils accepted by the Eastern Church. Wesley began reading this work on September 13, 1736. He concluded his reading a week later, but from that point on he read it nightly until September 26. He then began a prolonged study of it until October 4. The impact of his reading and study was pronounced in that it "disillusioned him about the transmission of true doctrine and practice by Church Councils and the Post-Nicene Fathers."

Mon.13. I began reading…Bishop Beveridge's *Panectae canonum conciliorum*. Nothing could so effectually have convinced us that both particular and 'general councils may err, and have erred;' and that 'things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority unless they be taken out of Holy Scripture.

Wesley adjusts his conclusion for that day in his MS Journals and Diaries.

Monday, September 13. I…began reading over Bishop Beveridge's *Panectae canonum conciliorum*. Nothing could so effectually have convinced me that both Particular and 'General Councils may err and have erred;' and of the infinite difference there is between the decisions of the wisest men and those of the Holy Ghost recorded in his Word.

Additionally, Beveridge wrote in 1678 his *Codex Canonum Ecclesiae Primitivae Vindicatus as Illustratus* ("The Book of Canons of the Primitive Church Vindicated and Illustrated"), which attempted to demonstrate that the *Canons* were apostolic in origin and were universally

130 Wesley, *Works* (BCE), 18, 171, note 36.
133 Wesley, *Works*, (BCE), Ibid., 422.
practiced in the primitive church at least during the first three hundred years. Wesley first read this work while at Oxford and then again returns to it while in Georgia.\textsuperscript{134}

Mon. 20. We ended (of which I must confess I once though more highly than I ought to think) the Apostolical Canons; so called, as Bishop Beveridge observes, 'because partly grounded upon, partly agreeing with, the traditions delivered down from the apostles'. But he observes farther,…. 'They contain the discipline used in the church at the time when they were collected, not when the Council of Nicaea met; for then many parts of it were useless and obsolete.'\textsuperscript{135}

Nevertheless, Wesley appears to neglect in his references any significant pneumatological language from Beveridge. What Wesley does include is the standard template of pneumatological understanding at that time within the Church of England. In doing so Wesley apparently desired to communicate that although Beveridge's patristic scholarship was influential, other areas of theological scholarship were not. This is despite the fact that Beveridge shared common soteriological and pneumatological viewpoints that could have strengthened Wesley's articulation of such. As with Wesley, soteriology for the Anglicans, including Beveridge, focused on transformation or being "partakers of the divine nature." In teaching on the death of Christ, Beveridge is clear.

It did not only pluck out its sting, but likewise deprive it of its strength, so that He did not only merit by His death that I should never die for sin, but likewise that I should die to it. Neither did He only merit by His life that I should be accounted righteous in Him before God, but likewise that I should be made righteous in myself by God.\textsuperscript{136}

For Beveridge and many of his peers, the sanctification that is fashioned in individual Christians is done so by Christ through the Holy Spirit.

For the nature of God being purity itself, they who are pure in heart are so far like to God; and 'partakers of the Divine Nature,' as St Peter speaks: and,

\textsuperscript{134} Geordan Hammond, \textit{High Church Anglican Influences on John Wesley's Conception of Primitive Christianity}, 183-4.
\textsuperscript{135} Wesley, \textit{Works}, (BCE), Ibid. 171-2, 424.
therefore, if they do but look into their own hearts, so much as they see of purity, so much they see of God Himself there, Whose image and likeness it is.\textsuperscript{137}

"Holiness", according to Beveridge, "consists in the inclination of the soul to God; the soul's conformity to God's nature and word; the soul's performing all duties upon holy motives; the soul's dedicating itself to God; its aiming chiefly at holy ends."\textsuperscript{138} Although his language of perfection is somewhat muted in that he does not employ the word "theosis" in his works, nevertheless he appears to define his own theology of perfection.

…our human persons in particular can never be purified by partaking of the Divine Nature; which we can never do any other way, but only by believing and trusting in that Divine Person to Which our nature is united, even Jesus Christ…He will make us "partakers of the Divine Nature," by giving us that Divine Spirit…Which…presently exerts His Divine Power and Grace upon our hearts, making them as sincerely pure and holy, as the hearts of lapsed creatures can be made.\textsuperscript{139}

Although Beveridge sounds strangely Wesleyan in his perspective, he resists the edge of the cliff that Wesley often approached (and retreated from) by not affirming complete participation in the Divine Nature, or perfection in love for God on this side of death.

E. William Law (1686-1761)

Law was an English theologian and devotional writer who was educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. In 1711 he was elected to a fellowship in his college and ordained as a deacon in the Church of England. Upon the accession of George I Law refused to take the oath of allegiance, was deprived of his fellowship, and became a nonjuror, although remaining in communion with the Church of England.\textsuperscript{140} In William Law a line can be traced from the

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{137} Beveridge, Ibid., volume V, 400.
\item \textsuperscript{138} Beveridge, Ibid., volume X, 111.
\item \textsuperscript{139} Beveridge, Ibid., volume V, 395.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
mysticism of the Pietists, the thought of the Cambridge Platonists to the theology of John Wesley.

In the writings of William Law, Protestant mysticism in the eighteenth century attained its most perfect expression. He shows throughout his life the influence of the Cambridge Platonists, Benjamin Whichcote, John Smith, Henry More and Ralph Cudworth, but early on he formed his own mind directly on the great models of mystical piety. In his first creative period, in which he produced *Christian Perfection* (1726) and *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (1729), he strongly follows the line of classical, medieval mysticism, with much emphasis on self-denial and negation.141

Law’s most influential work was his *Serious Call*, which influenced the lives of Whitefield and the Wesleys.142 Although Law was a mystic and in the latter part of his life the chief promoter in his era of the theosophy of Jacob Boehme, like Wesley, Law was interested above all in encouraging a practical lived religion. It was the saints’ “piety, their love of God, that you are to imitate, and not the particular form of their life,” Law had written.143 Appealing to Wesley was the fact that Law drove home relentlessly the contrast between the lives satisfied with “riches, prosperity, pleasures, indulgences, social position, and honor,” even when associated with the church, and those who seek “that religion or devotion which is to govern the ordinary actions of our life.”144 In his work *A Serious Call* Law argued that if Christians really desire to follow Christ, “it must be in every area of activity, in business and leisure as well as in strictly devotional practices. The Christian life, he maintains, must be continual practice of humility, self-denial, and renunciation of the world.”145

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144 Ibid.
During the early years of his theological formation, Wesley began to cultivate a deeper devotional life and eventually came into contact with William Law’s two most practical treatises. “These possess a rich conception of ethical Christianity combined with a disciplined devotional life. They interfaced well with Wesley’s awakened spirituality.”

Between 1728 and 1735, Wesley was heavily influenced by William Law. “During this period Wesley traveled several times to London for personal interviews with Law,” in addition to corresponding with Law through letters. Under Law’s influence Wesley began to search after salvation and assurance by means of contemplation. Here the emphasis was upon the personal experience of God according to the mystical scheme of inner penance.

William Law and his writings had a profound impact upon John Wesley during this period. The young Oxford student, being somewhat serious by nature, set himself to Law’s program of discipline in earnest…. Devotional literature was instrumental in this reorientation of Wesley’s life, and William Law’s works were certainly in the forefront of these. It is a program centered in Christian Perfection, a conception embracing (1) the perfect love of God and Man, (2) self-denial, (3) humility, and (4) renunciation of the world and worldly pursuits.

Although Wesley ultimately broke with Law and at times castigated him with great fervor, nevertheless within the framework of his practical pneumatology and doctrine of perfection (even his more mature view of perfection) he did not escape the trickledown effect of Law’s influence in those areas.


Robert Tuttle, Jr., *John Wesley: His Life and Theology*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Corporation, 1978), 150.

Tyson, 60.

Coppedge insists that for Wesley, the reading of Law’s works “convinced Wesley that holiness of heart and life was the essence of New Testament Christianity.” Coppedge, 18.
Recounting the discovery of William Law’s books, seen from the distance of many years, Wesley was effusive in his praise of Law.

A year or two after, Mr. Law’s “Christian Perfection” and “Serious Call” were put into my hands. These convinced me, more than ever, of the absolute impossibility of being half a Christian; and I determined, through his grace, (the absolute necessity of which I was deeply sensible of,) to be all devoted to God, to give him all my soul, my body, and my substance.\footnote{Wesley, \textit{Works}, XI, 367.}

Wesley’s “Letter to a Friend” (May 14, 1765), describes the same event in this way.

In 1727 I read Mr. Law’s ‘Christian Perfection,’ and ‘Serious Call,’ and more explicitly resolved to be all devoted to God, in body, soul, and spirit. In 1730 I began to be \textit{homo unius libri}; to study (comparatively) no book but the bible. I then saw, in a stronger light than ever before, that only one thing is needful, even faith that worketh by the love of God and man, all inward and outward holiness; and I groaned to love God with all my heart, and to serve Him with all my strength.\footnote{Wesley, \textit{Works}, III, 213.}

Once again in recounting the same period in a Journal entry (May 5, 1738) Wesley wrote:

But meeting now with Mr. Law’s “Christian Perfection” and “Serious Call,” although I was much offended at many parts of both, yet they convinced me more than ever of the exceeding height and breadth and depth of the law of God. The light flowed in so mightily upon my soul, that everything appeared in a new view. I cried to God for help, and resolved not to prolong the time of obeying Him as I had never done before.\footnote{Wesley, \textit{Works}, I, 99. Wesley’s Georgia Journal entries regularly cite the reading of Law during his time there.}

Even after significant conflict and criticism of Law, Wesley still acknowledged in 1760 that “it is true, that Mr. Law, whom I love and reverence now, was once ‘a kind of oracle’ to me.”\footnote{Wesley, \textit{Works}, III, 19.}

As late as 1789, just two years before his death, in his sermon “On a Single Eye” Wesley offers high praise to the writing of Law.

The same truth, that strong and elegant writer, Mr. Law, earnestly presses in his “Serious Call to a Devout Life,”—a treatise which will hardly be excelled, if it
be equaled, in the English tongue, either for beauty of expression, or for justness and depth of thought.¹⁵⁶

As has been noted, Wesley regarded love as the indispensable condition for all actions that might in the strictest sense be termed as good. It is true that a person could do good and avoid evil before the love of God was poured out in the heart, but Wesley suggested that the outward performance of such good was only of provisional value, but that the performance of good that followed the inner renewal by God’s grace should in the proper sense be characterized as good.¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless, through reading Law, “Wesley came to understand quite clearly the end or goal of religion, which is sanctification or holiness, that is, loving God and neighbor in all sincerity and devotion.”¹⁵⁸

Love as the content of true piety was a legacy that Wesley owed first of all to William Law’s influence. After his (1738) conversion this concept remained determinative for his ethic, though not without undergoing profound revision. Law’s contention for human striving toward love for God had driven Wesley deep into a legalistic piety. But he recognized in connection with his discovery of justification by faith alone, that it was faith alone that opened the way by which love for God and neighbor filled the heart and became the motivating force for one’s action. After this discovery, loving God and one’s neighbor was no longer a means of self-justification before God…but the response of a joyous assurance of having experienced God’s love.¹⁵⁹

The most obvious contribution of William Law to Wesley’s theology in particular is in the doctrine of Christian perfection. It was Law’s work that Wesley himself claimed had clarified his view on Christian Perfection.”¹⁶⁰ “While in their mature thought Wesley and Law formulated this doctrine quite differently, it is undeniable that under Law’s influence Wesley was ‘seized of an idea that never after that let him go.’”¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶ Wesley, Works, VII, 297.
¹⁵⁷ Marquardt, John Wesley’s Social Ethics, 103-4.
¹⁵⁸ Collins, John Wesley, 41-2.
¹⁵⁹ Marquardt, 104.
¹⁶⁰ Hattersley, The Life of John Wesley, 81.
¹⁶¹ Tyson, John Wesley and William Law, 68.
We see in both men an interest in Christian Perfection that fills all of life with a devotional quality. And in his practice of “works of piety” Wesley closely follows William Law’s example; both insist on the importance of self-discipline, private prayer, fasting, stewardship of time and wealth, propriety in amusements (though in this Law was more rigid than Wesley), and modesty and plainness in attire.  

Nevertheless, part of Wesley’s breakthrough at Aldersgate had to do with his realization that the holiness (in terms of its inception) that had so engulfed his mind and spirit since his reading of à Kempis and Law would be actualized in his life, not by works nor by human will and effort however well-intentioned or sincere, but simply as a result of divine grace and favour. “This means, then, that although Wesley distinguished the two works of justification and regeneration, he nevertheless viewed these two distinct graces in a similar fashion in that both richly display the favor and bounty of the divine love,” and that it is from these, and because of these two graces that sanctification becomes not the burden of the Christian, but the delight—an understanding that the Moravian Pietists instilled in him and which allowed him to move beyond the strictures of William Law.

As has been demonstrated in this chapter, although Wesley was circumspect in his use of Anglican sources for his doctrine of perfection, almost to the point of non-inclusion, it is clear that he did not believe that he was hiding his theological persuasion. In fact, in some measure Wesley attributes the publication of his sermon on Christian Perfection in September 1741 to Bishop Edmund Gibson. Several times in later years Wesley told the story.

I think it was in the latter end of the year 1740, that I had a conversation with Dr. Gibson, then bishop of London, at Whitehall. He asked me what I meant by perfection. I told him without any disguise or reserve. When I ceased speaking, he said, "Mr. Wesley, if this be all you mean, publish it to all the world. If any one then can confute what you say, he may have free leave." I answered, "My

\[162\] Ibid.

\[163\] Collins, The Theology of John Wesley, 196.
Lord, I will;" and accordingly wrote and published the sermon on Christian perfection.\(^{164}\)

Wesley sincerely desired to stay within the fold of the Church of England, at least in terms of his doctrine of perfection, yet he fails to describe the details of Bishop Gibson's approval of the doctrine. Instead, Wesley seems content to be silent in the detail while implicitly suggesting that his explanation of the subject was not only understood by Gibson, but approved in the sense that it did not apparently contradict his own understanding of the subject.

In terms of the influence of these selected Anglican Divines on the doctrine of perfection of John Wesley, it is difficult to completely dismiss the potential, if not actual influence. A case could be made that Wesley's theological foundation was built primarily on these men, who in themselves had been nuanced by the Greek Fathers. Having said that, such a contention is not entirely demonstrateable and therefore remains a subject of further investigation, while at the same time reviewing the more direct influences of the Greek Fathers on Wesley which remain the subjects of chapters 4 and 5 of this work.

\(^{164}\) Wesley, *Works*, XI, 374.
Chapter 4

The Pneumatology and Theosis of Selected Eastern Fathers

I. Understanding Theosis

Although some expression or definition of theosis has already been provided, for the purpose of this work a more complete understanding of theosis, as articulated by the Fathers of the Church to whom Wesley was attracted, is necessary. As will be clear from the following narrative, theosis is multifaceted and cannot easily be encapsulated.\(^1\) Despite this, such a description will assist in locating the Eastern Fathers in terms of their expression of theosis and Wesley's appropriation or lack of such. In particular, this chapter will attempt to determine if Wesley's usage demonstrates directive influence from these Fathers. As in the previous chapter, some preliminary conclusions will be offered in respect to influence.

Wesley's vision of the goal of sanctification, Christian perfection, appears to have clear precedents in other ancient ascetic literature. Wesley consistently taught that the process of sanctification culminated in entire sanctification or Christian perfection, which he understood to mean the goal of loving God with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength.

The East, with its strong interest in sanctification, has understood humankind to be corrupt and in desperate need of healing. The incarnation, then, is understood to be a recapitulation of humankind that makes possible our participation in God, our true and absolute healing. The Eastern understanding, which is based upon the conviction that God became what we are in order to reveal what we might become, looks at the Cross in therapeutic language.

Redemption is a recapitulative work, as we become like him who has become like us.

\(^1\) The central tenets that comprise the body of teaching regarding theosis may be grouped into four categories: participation in the divine nature, recapitulation, union of the soul with God, and progress of the soul in heaven.
The Eastern understanding of God positions him as present throughout the cosmos in his creative energies, while at the same time this God has made humanity in his image and likeness and positioned humanity at the heart of things, thus revealing the strong intimacy and reciprocity of God's relationship with humanity. Additionally, the Fathers of the East are not hesitant to say that God became man in order that an individual might become god. Deification or theosis is in some deep fashion "the other side of Incarnation—i.e. incarnation both in Jesus and in the individual—and thus it takes places where this incarnation takes place…"\(^2\)

The Eastern fathers maintained the free and undeserved character of God's grace toward humanity, expressing it at times in the language of justification by faith, although they saw ongoing, as it were, justification in a distinct light. Making firm differentiations between justification and sanctification was not the heart of doctrinal discourse for them. More important to the thinking of the Eastern Church as it concerned faith and justification was how a Christian was purified. Ultimately, salvation was theologically that which stressed the goal of the Christian life as the purification of the soul. Although speaking of conversion in definitive terms, the majority of the early Greek fathers stressed that God's work in the life of a Christian was more of a process than a definitive moment. Additionally, whereas later theology would assign purification to the sanctification stage of a Christian, the Greek Fathers allowed no functional difference between the two. Purification and justification were considered joint actions of the Holy Spirit, operating in the life of a Christian and enabling that one to "see" God.

…the early fathers believed that God's salvation through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ meant providing a believer with the means to perceive god and thereby share in his divine life. That is, salvation was supposed to

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culminate in divine theosis or deification—becoming transformed according to God—a seminal part of the teaching of early fathers such as Irenaeus, Athanasius, and Gregory of Nyssa. The point is that faith is a divine work of salvation "in us" as well as "for us" in order to change us, that we may behold God.³

It was not until the mid-fourth century that significant thought regarding the role and nature of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church developed. The Council of Nicea and its associated Creed as it was revised, affirmed, among other things, the belief in the Holy Spirit and subsequent formulas and synodal decrees seldom went beyond this germinal affirmation.⁴

Deification or theosis was an important theological concept in the early church, although it took centuries for the term 'theosis' to emerge as the standard label for the concept.⁵ Harnack, while discussing the fourth to the seventh century in the Eastern Church, concludes that "the idea of deification was the ultimate and supreme thought" of that era and that after "Origen, it is found in all the Fathers of the ancient Church, and that in a primary position."⁶ At the same time, it is worth noting that none of the early Church Fathers clearly articulated what theosis actually meant. It was more or less implied in their writings. "Despite the centrality of deification for the soteriology of the Greek fathers,…none of them has given a precise definition for the term theosis or its equivalents…. According to our existing materials, none of the early fathers had written a single separate treatise on deification."⁷ It was Gregory Nazianzus who "established divinization as the primary concept for salvation in Greek

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³ D. H. Williams, Evangelicals and Tradition, The Formative Influence of the Early Church, (Grand Rapids, MI; Baker Academic, 2005), 140.
⁷ Nathan K. K. Ng, "A Reconsideration of the Use of the Term 'Deification' in Athanasius," Coptic Church Review, 22 (Summer 2001), 41.
tradition. He coined the term theosis…and made the idea central to his work."\(^8\) Gregory used the term for the first time in 363 A.D. in an oration delivered after the death of the Emperor Julian the Apostate.

These men that are amongst men, and yet above things human; these that are bound, and yet free; that are overcome, yet invincible; that have nothing in this world, and get all things in the world above; of whom the life is double—the one part despised, the other diligently sought after; who are through mortification of themselves immortal; through solitariness united with God; that are without desire, and with the Divinity, and without the passion of early love; whose is the Fountain of Light, and its irradiation even now; whose are the angelic chants, the station through the night, and the escape of soul rapt up, before its time, unto God; to whom belong the power of purifying others, and the being purified themselves; who know no limit either in ascending or in deification [emphasis mine], to whom belong the rocks and heavens...and who…will muzzle even thy [original emphasis] impiety, even though thou be exalted for a little while…\(^9\)

Gregory understood "Christian salvation in terms of the larger idea of theosis, or "divinization," the transforming participation of the human person in the being and life of God…and…it was Gregory who established divinization as the primary concept for salvation in Greek Christian tradition."\(^10\) However, although he "invented the term, Gregory of course did not invent the ideas it signifies. The notion of theosis goes back to the second-century Fathers, Clement of Alexandria…and Irenaeus of Lyons…"\(^11\)

The church fathers prior to Nazianzus, who refer to deification, take it for granted that their audience understood what they were writing about. Clement of Alexandria appears to be the first to use the vocabulary of deification (not theosis), but at no point explains his

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\(^11\) Norman Russell, *Fellow Workers with God, Orthodox Thinking on Theosis* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2009), 22.
nomenclature. At its core, the doctrine of theosis is not an affirmation of pantheistic identity between God and humanity, but of participation, through grace, in the divine life. This participation renews humanity and progressively transfigures an individual into the image of Christ. However, even though transformation occurs, the process of theosis does not suggest that the nature of the human person changes. Put another way, although a person may be divinized or become more like God, at no time during the process of theosis, including the death and resurrection of the individual, does the person become a god by nature or essence. The entire goal of deification is the complete communion with God, which was initially severed when sin entered the world through Adam. Within the Greek patristic thought, one uncovers a vision of man who is called to "know" God, to "participate" in His life, and to be "saved," not just through an external action of the Divine or through the rational human understanding of proposition truths or theology, but by actually "becoming God." Still, the subject of theosis within the writings of the Fathers produced multiplied images and language to express the depth of their nuanced theology on the subject.

A great variety of terms are used to communicate the idea of deification…. Among the conceptual equivalents for deification are union, participation, partaking, communion/partnership, divine filiation, adoption, recreation, intertwined with the divine, similitude with God, transformation, elevation, transmutation, commingling, assimilation, intermingling, rebirth, regeneration, transfiguration. The preferences of particular authors vary greatly.13

Even a cursory glance at representative writings demonstrates the multiplicity of synonymous nomenclature. Irenaeus, in speaking of Christ and the incarnation declared "the Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who did, through his transcendent love, become what we are, that He

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13 Finlan and Kharlamov, Theosis, Deification in Christian Theology, 4-5.
might bring us to be even what He is Himself."\textsuperscript{14} 

Clement of Alexandria stated "yea, I say, the Word of God became man, that thou mayest learn from man how man may become God."\textsuperscript{15} Later in the same exhortation, Clement adds "But since Thou leadest me to the light, O Lord…That light is eternal life…He (also), having bestowed on us the truly great, divine, and inalienable inheritance of the Father, deifying man by heavenly teaching…"\textsuperscript{16} In describing true Christian wisdom (gnosis) Clement asserts, "this is the function of the Gnostic, who has been perfected, to have converse with God through the great High Priest, being made like the Lord, up to the measure of his capacity, in the whole service of God, which tends to the salvation of men."\textsuperscript{17} And again, in linking love and perfection notes, "And the man who turns from among the Gentiles will ask for faith, while he that ascends to knowledge will ask for the perfection of love."\textsuperscript{18} Athanasius famously teaches that God in Christ "was made man that we might be made God," while at the same time affirming the divine role of the Holy Spirit in the process of deification.\textsuperscript{19}

And as, when we hear of Him as Lord and God and true Light, we understand Him as being from the Father, so…the Word was made flesh in order to offer up this body for all, and that we, partaking of His Spirit, might be deified, a gift which we could not otherwise have gained than by His clothing Himself in our created body, for hence we derive our name of "men of God" and "men in Christ."\textsuperscript{20}

Basil of Caesarea claims that through the divine aid of the Holy Spirit "hearts are lifted up, the weak are held by the hand, and they who are advancing are brought to perfection."\textsuperscript{21} As a result of this participation and transformation, according to Basil, "comes…the heavenly citizenship,

\textsuperscript{14} Irenaeus, "Against Heresies," Book V, preface, \textit{ANF}, Volume 1, 526.
\textsuperscript{16} Clement of Alexandria, Ibid. 203.
\textsuperscript{18} Clement of Alexandria, Ibid, Book VII, chapter VII, 536.
\textsuperscript{20} Athanasius, "Defence of the Nicene Definition," chapter III, Section 14, \textit{NPNF} Second Series, Volume 4, 159.
a place in the chorus of angels, joy without end, abiding in God, the being made like to God, and, highest of all, the being made God.”

Gregory of Nyssa continues the theosis train in his work "The Great Catechism," by concluding, "since the God who was manifested infused Himself into perishable humanity for this purpose, viz. that by this communion with Deity mankind might at the same time be deified.”

That deity should be born in our nature, ought not…present any strangeness to the minds of those who do not take too narrow a view of things…. only now He Who holds together Nature in existence is transfused in us; while at that other time He was transfused throughout our nature, in order that our nature might by this transfusion of the Divine become itself divine, rescued as it was from death, and put beyond the reach of the caprice of the antagonist.

Gregory of Nazianzen, in his first Oration "On Easter and His Reluctance," implores us to "become like Christ, since Christ became like us. Let us become God's for His sake, since He for ours became Man." In extolling the virtue and value of holiness, while at the same time exalting in praise Jesus Christ, the One Whose minister he is, Gregory offers a clear and clarion call.

Who can mold, as clay-figures are modeled in a single day, the defender of truth, who is to take his stand with Angels, and give glory with Archangels, and cause the sacrifice to ascend to the altar on high, and share the priesthood of Christ, and renew the creature, and set for the image, and create inhabitants for the world above, aye and, greatest of all, be God, and make others to be God?

Gregory of Nyssa adds to our understanding of theosis when he distinguishes between complete identity with divinity and likeness with divinity.

For since the method of our salvation was made effectual not so much by His precepts in the way of teaching as by the deeds of Him Who has realized an

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22 Basil, Ibid, 15-16.
26 Gregory of Nazianzen, "Oration 2, In Defence of His Flight to Pontus," Section 73, NPNF, Second Series, Volume 7, 220.
actual fellowship with man, and has effected life as a living fact, so that by means of the flesh which He has assumed, and at the same time deified, everything kindred and related may be saved along with it, it was necessary that some means should be devised by which there might be, in the baptismal process, a kind of affinity and likeness between him who follows and Him Who leads the way.  

Participation, then, is what produces the copy's likeness to the original so that the likeness has something of the original present in the copy.

The Patristic writers also declared that in Christ's incarnation, Jesus recapitulated humanity. The first Adam fell short of union with God because of sin. The second Adam, Christ, accomplished the union of the two natures in His person at the incarnation. Because Christ "lives" in His glorified body today, deification or theosis is a future certainty for all believers. The purpose of humanity's existence was revealed in the incarnation of Christ. "He came down from heaven to redeem the earth, to unite man with God forever." In the person of Jesus Christ deified humanity will be created and achieve the union God intended when He placed Adam in the Garden of Eden. The Greek Fathers emphasis is not so much a focus on Christ as the substitute for humanity's sins, but on His recapitulation of what was lost through the first Adam, which translates into a "context of victory over death and of sanctification."

II. The Doctrines of selected Greek Fathers and Wesley's Use of Such Fathers

As noted in Chapter 2, it is the contention of this dissertation that John Wesley drew deeply from the well of the Greek Fathers writings. A review of Wesley's Works produces a significant list of Eastern Fathers for whom at least a passing reference is given. Wesley demonstrates some acquaintance with at least 10 Eastern writers, beginning with Origen (185-

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254) and concluding with Chrysostom (347-407). Irenaeus is also considered, although no true Eastern or Western orientation is ascribed to him due to his second century ministry period. Russell adds a helpful overview in his work, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*.

In summary, until the end of the fourth century the metaphor of deification develops along two distinct lines: on the one hand, the transformation of humanity in principle as a consequence of the Incarnation; on the other, the ascent of the soul through the practice of virtue. The former, broadly characteristic of Justin, Irenaeus, Origen, and Athanasius, is based on St. Paul's teaching on incorporation into Christ through baptism and implies a realistic approach to deification. The latter, typical of Clement and the Cappadocians, is fundamentally Platonic and implies a philosophical or ethical approach. By the end of the fourth century the realist and philosophical strands begin to converge.30

A. Clement of Alexandria (155-222AD).

Clement, who was born in Athens and became a Christian through his study of philosophy, ultimately joined Pantaenus's school in Alexandria. Clement succeeded Pantaenus as head of the school around 190 A.D. As noted earlier, Clement is considered the first of the Eastern Fathers to teach divinization. In describing the work of Christ, Clement says "the Sun of Righteousness… Having bestowed on us the truly great, divine, and inalienable inheritance of the Father, deifying man by heavenly teaching,…"31 In almost hymn-like fashion, Clement proceeds first to exhort humanity to listen to Christ so as to be considered worthy of the kingdom, then secondly he extols the Holy Trinity and their combined ministry efforts on behalf of humanity.

Exert your will only, and you have overcome ruin; bounded to the wood of the cross, thou shalt be freed from destruction: the word of God will be thy pilot, and the Holy Spirit will bring thee to anchor in the haven of heaven. Then shall

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thou see my God, and be initiated into the sacred mysteries, and come to the fruition of those things which are laid up in heaven…. Come thou also, O aged man…allow thyself to be led to the truth. I give thee the staff [of the cross] on which to lean. Christ, by whom the eyes of the blind recover sight, will shed on thee a light brighter than the sun… This Jesus…prays for and exhorts men…. "For I want, I want to impart to you this grace, bestowing on you the perfect boon of immortality; and I confer on you both Word and the knowledge of God, My complete self…. I desire to restore you according to the original model, that ye may become also like Me. I anoint you with the unction of faith by which you throw off corruption, and show you the naked form of righteousness by which you ascend to God. Come to Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest…. Let us aspire, then, after what is good; let us become God-loving men, and obtain the greatest of all things which are incapable of being harmed—God and life.32

One can see in Clement the combination of the Divine effort on behalf of humanity, coupled with the sincere aspirations and efforts of humanity to pursue a life of virtue, while in some manner ascending to that which is perfect—immortality and divinity. There is no judicial atonement language, but only that of restoration and anointing, therapeutic terms common in the Greek Fathers when the incarnation/atonement themes are addressed. Clement is in this work careful to express the symbiotic cooperation of the divine with the human in the progress toward perfection.

There is therefore no room for doubt,…but holding on to truth with our teeth, we must with all our might follow God, and…having learned that we are the most excellent of His possessions, let us commit ourselves to God, loving the Lord God, and regarding this as our business all our life long.33

Within even this paragraph, Clement highlights the excellence of God's creative work in forming humanity, while at the same time using such language as the motivation for a commitment to directing one's life toward loving God without reservation. Divinization then, is understood by Clement as moral perfection, that is, in his perfect state man becomes godlike.

32 Clement of Alexandria, "Exhortation to the Heathen," Chapter XII, ANF, 2, 205-206.
33 Clement of Alexandria, Ibid, 206.
More importantly, the motivating impulse for moral improvement in this life is expressed by Clement in the second to last paragraph of his "Exhortation to the Heathen".

It is time, then, for us to say that the pious Christian alone is rich and wise, and of noble birth, and thus call and believe him to be God's image, and also his likeness, having become righteous and holy and wise by Jesus Christ, and so far already like God. Accordingly this grace is indicated by the prophet, when he says, "I said that ye are gods, and all sons of the Highest." For us, yea us, He has adopted and wished to be called the Father of us alone… Such is then our position who are the attendants of Christ. 

Clement's work, "The Instructor," is written to Christians who have been rescued from the coils of heathenism. It is intended to be a catalogue of Christian virtue and "a guide for the formation and development of Christian character, and for living a Christian life."35 Clement identifies at the outset of "The Instructor" Christ as the heavenly guide, the Word who is to be viewed as our Tutor or Instructor.36 Clement consistently speaks of his work as a guide to piety, intended to life that is seen in right dispositions and character. He speaks of the diseased soul and Christ's eager desire "to perfect us by a gradation conducive to salvation."37 Further, he returns to the highest motivation for a life of piety, that being God's love for man. It is out of a deep approbation of this love that the Christian is exhorted to return this love through obedience.

But what is loveable, and is not also loved by Him? And man has proved to be loveable; consequently man is loved by God. For how shall he not be loved for whose sake the only-begotten Son is sent from the Father's bosom, the Word of faith, the faith which is superabundant…. Now, it is incumbent on us to return His love, who lovingly guides us to that life which is best; and to live in accordance with the injunctions of His will, not only fulfilling what is commanded, or guarding against what is forbidden, but turning away from some examples, and imitating others as much as we can, and thus to perform

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34 Clement of Alexandria, Ibid. Clement in this quote draws a distinction between the image and likeness of God. Humanity never loses the image of God, however, because the likeness consists in moral resemblance, humanity may and in fact, does lose this. It is recovered only when that individual become righteous, holy and wise through union with the Incarnate Christ.
37 Clement of Alexandria, Ibid.
the works of the Master according to His similitude, and so fulfil what Scripture says as to our being made in His image and likeness.\(^{38}\)

Clement argues carefully for the already in time perfection of Christians and at the same moment, the not-yet-completed perfection for them in eternity. At no time in his discourse does the already part of perfection lead to antinomian tendencies, in fact, quite the opposite occurs. In "The Stromata," Chapter X, entitled "Steps to Perfection," Clement notes, "a perfecting of man as man, is consummated by acquaintance with divine things, in character, life, and word, accordant and conformable to itself and to the divine Word."\(^{39}\) In the same paragraph however, he is careful to emphasize that this perfecting process is not simply engineered by man's will, but only as "faith is perfected" and "then developed through the grace of God."\(^{40}\) Yet, even within this progression, the seamless garment of salvation-perfection is never bifurcated in time and stages according to Clement, but runs fluidly and without interruption from beginning to completion.\(^{41}\)

As he articulates a life of virtue for the Christian,\(^{42}\) Clement understands three kinds of actions that a person may engage in. The first is right or perfect action and is appropriated only by the perfect man or true Christian Gnostic. The second kind of action Clement designates as medium or intermediate action, which is accomplished by less perfect Christians, who have not


\(^{40}\) Clement of Alexandria, Ibid.


\(^{42}\) Clement carefully articulates the qualities of perfected virtue. He includes suffering, fortitude, prudence, self-restraint, righteousness, endurance of circumstances, guarding against "pleasure and desire, grief and anger; and in general, to withstand everything which either by any force or fraud entices us.... Accordingly, pain is found beneficial in the healing art, and in discipline, and in punishment; and by it men's manners are corrected to their advantage. Forms of fortitude are endurance, magnanimity, high spirit, liberality, and grandeur. And for this reason he neither meets with the blame or the bad opinion of the multitude; nor is he subjected to opinions or flatteries.... He is liberal of what he possesses. And being a lover of men, he is a hater of the wicked.... He must consequently learn to be faithful both to himself and his neighbours, and obedient to the commandments." "The Stromata," Book VII, Chapter III, \textit{ANF}, 2, 527-528.
yet been perfected according to reason and knowledge. The consequence of living out this second strata of action is a lower grade of glory in heaven. The third kind of action, which he labels as sinful, belongs to the purview of the heathen or those who fall away from salvation.\textsuperscript{43} At the same time, Clement does not appear to grant absolute perfection in life and actions, or in the knowledge of God and conversation with God, even to the Christian Gnostic. He prefers to limit absolute perfection to heaven and eternity.

\begin{quote}
I affirm that Gnostic souls, that surpass in the grandeur of contemplation the mode of life of each of the holy ranks,…(by) embracing the divine vision…in the transcendently clear and absolutely pure insatiable vision which is the privilege of intensely loving souls,…Such is the vision attainable…. This is the function of the Gnostic, who has been perfected, to have converse with God through the Great High Priest, being made like the Lord, up to the measure of his capacity, in the whole service of God, which tends to the salvation of men…\textsuperscript{44}
\end{quote}

Perfection or deification for Clement understands the promise of theosis as the complete fullness of salvation. Additionally, Clement "understood deification as assimilation to God as far as possible," or up to the measure of his capacity, "in the progressive order of salvation."\textsuperscript{45} Perceiving deification in its moral and intellectual aspects, Clement rejected the idea of the ontological participation of human beings in the divine. In what he termed "impiety to utter;"

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{43} Clement of Alexandria, "The Stromata," Book VI, Chapter XIV, \textit{ANF}, 2, 505-506. According to Christensen, Clement's three primary works (Exhortation to the Greeks, The Instructor and Stromata) are addressed to three different types of person. "Exhortation to the Greeks" addresses the unconverted; "The Instructor" addresses young Christians (catechumens), along with believers in need of recovery, moral instruction, and the milk of Christ, and "Stromata" addresses the true Christian Gnostic who requires the meat of Christian knowledge in terms of Christian mysteries (Michael J. Christensen, "John Wesley: Christian Perfection as Faith Filled with the Energy of Love," (Eds.), \textit{Partakers of the Divine Nature}, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 222, 228n.15).
\end{quote}
Clement included daring "to say that we are a part of Him and of the same essence as God… I know not how one, who knows God, can bear to hear this…"\(^{46}\)

Wesley's appeal and use of Clement is at once limited and at the same time extensive. In his excursus on the Roman Catechism, Wesley appeals to both Augustine and Clement as examples of Church Fathers who determined that the best interpreter of the Scripture was the Scripture itself.\(^{47}\) In his "A Plain Account of Genuine Christianity," written in 1753, Wesley again affirms the character and the writings of various "primitive Fathers," including Clement. He asserts that he "esteem(s) them very highly in love," and reverences them because of the nature of their writings—writings that "describe true, genuine Christianity, and direct us to the strongest evidence of the Christian doctrine."\(^{48}\)

Additionally, Wesley uses Clement in a positive and negative fashion in one of his letters "To a Member of the Society." In this specific correspondence, Wesley acknowledges that in his past he was content to view Christians as perfected in love or as those who are not yet to that level and who, as a result, continually struggled with human frailties. His disposition had not changed by the time of this writing so that he simply relegated the struggler to the realm of human frailty, a point of reference that aligns well with that of Clement,\(^{49}\) even while taking issue with an aspect of Clement's description of Christ.

I "sum up the experience" of persons too, in order to form their general character…. It may be, you chiefly regard (as my brother does) the length of their experience. Now, this I make little account of: I measure the depth and breadth of it. Does it sink deep in humble gentle love? Does it extend wide in

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\(^{49}\) See footnote 43 above. The vacillation and inconsistency of Wesley's expressed and written viewpoint on the possibility of there existing two kinds of Christians, as opposed to simply the Christian or the non-Christian will be explained fuller in Chapter Five, p. 225, Footnote 106.
all inward and outward holiness? If so, I do not care whether they are of five or
five-and-thirty years' standing…. Undoubtedly Miss J—is deep in grace, and
lives like an angel here below. Yet some things in her character I do not admire:
I impute them to human frailty. Many years ago I might have said, but I do not
now, "Give me a woman made of stone, A widow of Pygmalion." And just such
a Christian, one of the Fathers, Clemens Alexandrinus, describes: But I do not
admire that description now as I did formerly. I now see a Stoic and a Christian
are different characters;…  

As noted in chapter 2, in 1739 the Wesleys published a seven stanza poem called "On Clemens
Alexandrinus's description of a Perfect Christian, and included it in their *Hymns and Sacred
Poems*. This early poem calls upon Clement's description of the goal of Christian perfection,
and in so doing reflects some of the content of Clement's Stromata 4, as well as Stromata 7,
"On Perfection." In his journal entry for Thursday, March 5, 1767, Wesley acknowledged that
his tract called "The Character of a Methodist" (published in 1742) was based on Clement's
work.

Five or six and thirty years ago, I much admired the character of a perfect
Christian drawn by Clemens Alexandrinus. Five or six and twenty years ago, a
thought came into my mind, of drawing such a character myself, only in a more
scriptural manner and mostly in the very words of Scripture: this I entitled, 'The
character of a Methodist,' believing that curiosity would incite more persons to
read it, and also that some prejudice might thereby be removed from candid
men.  

The prejudice Wesley refers to came in the form of invectives against his doctrine of
perfection, in that he was consistently accused of teaching that perfection was very attainable in
this life. Although there are sections of his writings, especially in his early descriptions of
perfection that seem to warrant this critique, nevertheless, in the journal entry noted above,
Wesley is exacting in his defense.

I have told all the world I am not perfect…. I tell you flat, I have not attained
the character I draw…. What I say, after having given a scriptural account of a

perfect Christian, is this:--'By these marks the Methodists desire to be distinguished from other men: By these we labour to distinguish ourselves.' And do not you yourself desire and labour after the very same thing?  

Although Wesley is generally effusive in his praise for Clement and acknowledges, to some degree, dependence upon him in some of his own work, nevertheless he is frustratingly vague and does not provide direct clues as to which of Clement's writings influenced his.

B. Athanasius (295-373 A.D.).

Athanasius was born in Alexandria and was trained there as a theologian, and in 328 A.D. upon the death of the bishop Alexander succeeded him in that post. Athanasius did more than any person to bring to culmination the triumph of the orthodox Nicene faith over Arianism. He devoted a great portion of his life to this struggle and in the process he was exiled five times. He was a central figure in the life and theology of the fourth-century Church. In most of the controversies and events of his time, his force of personality made an indelible mark on developments and influenced their direction and movement to a remarkable degree.  

Athanasius was not a systematic theologian and had no interest in theological speculation.  

For Athanasius, the incarnation of Christ and specifically his death on the cross, stands at the center of faith and theology, or in Athanasius' words, it stands as "the sum of our faith."  

Athanasius refined and developed his understanding of the incarnation in response to the Arian controversy, and in so doing inextricably linked the incarnation of Christ to the deification of humanity. "...He Himself has made us sons of the Father, and deified men by becoming himself man. Therefore He was not man and then became God, but He was God, and then..."

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52 Wesley, Ibid.  
became man, and that to deify us.” In a more nuanced statement, Athanasius ties not simply the incarnation to deification, but also humanity’s redemption, when he states, "But if that He might redeem mankind, the Word did come among us; and that He might hallow and deify them, the Word became flesh…” Athanasius views the incarnation of Christ as the entry point in time of a linear salvation and sanctification process which culminates in deification. He avoids a punctiliar approach to the order of salvation and very much like Clement views the order of salvation in a single frame, albeit exposed over time. Without the incarnation humanity remains "as they were, naked, and wretched, and dead, having no interest in the things given to the Son.”

In addressing the Arian contention regarding the so-called creaturely status of the Son, Athanasius argues carefully that Jesus was not simply created from matter, but in fact was the framer of matter and that Christ assumed bodily form in order to deify it.

Again, if the Son were a creature, man had remained mortal as before, not being joined to God;….To provide against this also, He sends His own Son, and He becomes Son of Man, by taking created flesh;…'For this end was He manifested,' as John has written, 'that He might destroy the works of the devil.' And these being destroyed from the flesh, we all were thus liberated by the kinship of the flesh, and for the future were joined, even we, to the Word. And being joined to God, no longer do we abide upon earth;…the truth shews us that the Word is not of things originate, but rather Himself their Framer. For therefore did He assume the body originate and human, that having renewed it as its Framer, He might deify it in Himself, and thus might introduce us all into the kingdom of heaven after His likeness. For man had not been deified if joined to a creature,… nor had man been brought into the Father's presence, unless He had been His natural and true Word who had put on the body…so also the man had not been deified, unless the Word who became flesh had been

58 Athanasius, Ibid.
by nature from the Father and true and proper to Him…. For therefore… his salvation and deification might be sure.\textsuperscript{59}

Although Athanasius' theology flowed through the cross, he also wrote of the Holy Spirit as a divine agent in the process of deification. The incarnation has been actualized in us through the Spirit of adoption, and because we partake of this Spirit by grace we can be deified.\textsuperscript{60}

He says, unless I had come and borne this their body, no one of them had been perfected, but one and all had remained corruptible. Work Thou then in them, O Father, and as Thou hast given to Me to bear this, grant to them Thy Spirit, that they too in It may become one, and may be perfected in Me. For their perfecting shews that Thy Word has sojourned among them… And the work is perfected, because men, redeemed from sin, no longer remain dead; but being deified, have in each other, by looking at Me, the bond of charity…. But we, apart from the Spirit, are strange and distant from God, and by the participation of the Spirit we are knit into the Godhead; so that our being in the Father is not ours, but is the Spirit's which is in us and abides in us, while by the true confession we preserve it in us, John again saying, 'Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God.'\textsuperscript{61}

For Athanasius, the persons of the Trinity work synergistically to identify with, redeem, adopt, sanctify, or hallow, and ultimately deify humanity, as humanity confesses Jesus as the Son of God. Athanasius interweaves this synergism throughout his writings, but perhaps it appears most clearly in three letters he wrote on the Holy Spirit and addressed to Serapion, the bishop of Thmuuis in Lower Egypt.\textsuperscript{62} As noted earlier, from these letters we determine that Athanasius was responding to a letter from Serapion in which Serapion described people who had "set

\textsuperscript{59} Athanasius, "Four Discourses Against the Arians," Discourse II, Chapter XXI, sections 69 and 70, Ibid, 386. "For He who is the Son of God, became Himself the Son of Man; and, as Word, He gives from the Father, for all things which the Father does and gives, He does and supplies through Him; and as the Son of Man, He Himself is said after the manner of men to receive what proceeds from Him, because His Body is none other than His, and is a natural recipient of grace,… For He received it as far as His man's nature was exalted; which exaltation was its being deified. But such an exaltation the Word Himself always had according to the Father's Godhead and perfections, which was His." Athanasius, Ibid, Discourse I, Chapter XI, section 45.

\textsuperscript{60} Athanasius, "Defence of the Nicene Definition," Chapter III, section 14, \textit{NPNF}, Second Series, 4, 159.


their minds against the Holy Spirit, claiming not only that he is a creature but also that he is one of the ministering spirits [Heb. 1.14] and is different from the angels only in degree.\textsuperscript{63}

Athanasius clearly asserts the co-equality and cooperation of the members of the Trinity.\textsuperscript{64}

Athanasius underlines that we are enlightened by the Holy Spirit as the instrument of Christ working in us, in addition, we are made alive by the Holy Spirit, which is in reality the Son living in us. The culmination of this process is divinization.

So then, in the Spirit the Word glorifies creatures, and after he has divinized them and made them sons of God, he leads them to the Father… And so, the Spirit is not one of the things that has come into existence, but is proper to the divinity of the Father, In him the Word divinizes all that has come into existence. And the one in whom creatures are divinized cannot himself be external to the divinity of the Father.\textsuperscript{65}

Athanasius thinks of creation, redemption, and sanctification as a single work of God and the completion and perfection of this work as the concern of the Holy Spirit. "The point simply stated is that whenever God acts, the Holy Spirit is present as the activator; or conversely, when the Spirit acts, there God acts, from the Father, through the Son."\textsuperscript{66}

\begin{footnotes}


64 Athanasius, Ibid, Letter 1.19.3-7; 1.20.1., 82-84.

65 Athanasius, Ibid. Letter 1.25.5, 92-93.

66 Theodore C. Campbell, "The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Theology of Athanasius," 427. Athanasius "cannot speak of the Father without immediately speaking of the Son, nor of the Son without the Father. He cannot speak of the Son without also noting that the Son is… the one through whom we are knit into the life of the Trinity." Peter J. Leithart, \textit{Athanasius}, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011, 62. Norman Russell declares that "Athanasius sees the whole of reality in terms of two opposite polarities: the uncreated Godhead at one pole, and the nothingness from which the world was created at the other…. Left to our own devices, we would simply unravel and eventually collapse into non-Existence. Christ reverses the gravitational pull. In him, and more specifically in the representative humanity which he assumed and deified, transcendence and nearness meet, the uncreated and the created converge…. What this means is that divinity is ascribed to the human nature of Christ while humanity is ascribed to his divine nature. The result is a renewal of the human race, a second creation, effected this time from within the human state in the person of Christ…. The representative humanity assumed by Christ at the Incarnation was deified by the Word and exalted through the Passion. This is the cornerstone of Athanasius' narrative of salvation. The next step is how as individual believers we can share in Christ's exalted humanity. The answer is by becoming sons and daughters of God through baptism, so that with the Son of God dwelling within us we can participate in the movement begun by him towards the pole of divine transcendence. That is why for Athanasius the adoption effected by baptism is equivalent to deification. It brings about the renewal of our human nature through participation in the divine nature. It enables us to share in the bond of love uniting the Father and the Son. And finally, in conjunction with the moral life encouraging progress in virtue, it

\end{footnotes}
Not to be lost in Athanasius' pneumatology is his emphasis on human transformation while on this earth. In the "Life of Antony," Athanasius offers a list of characteristics that comprise his view of virtue.

Therefore let the desire of possession take hold of no one, for what gain is it to acquire these things which we cannot take with us? Why not rather get those things which we can take away with us—to wit, prudence, justice, temperance, courage, understanding, love, kindness to the poor, faith in Christ, freedom from wrath, hospitality? If we possess these, we shall find them of themselves preparing for us a welcome there in the land of the meek-hearted…. Wherefore having already begun and set out in the way of virtue, let us strive the more that we may attain those things that are before.67

He goes on to encourage Christians not to fear the appropriation of virtue "for it is not far from us, nor is it without ourselves, but it is within us, and is easy if only we are willing."68 Virtue according to Athanasius has need only of willingness on our part because the soul was originally created "fair and exceeding honest" with an "spiritual faculty" for virtue. "Athenasius clearly believes and teaches that the grace of divinization must be acquired by an intentional human effort at reproducing the life and virtues of God Himself through discipleship and imitation."69

Ultimately and finally, Athanasius encapsulated the terminus point of deification with an emphasis on love. In commenting on Jesus' prayer in John 17, Athanasius writes "And the brings us, in the likeness of Christ, to the fullness of the kingdom of heaven." Fellow Workers with God: Orthodox Thinking on Theosis 42-43. See also Khaled Anatolios, Retrieving Nicaea, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011, p. 147). See also Andrew Louth who offers a similar point of reference in his chapter "The Place of Theosis in Orthodox Theology." Andrew Louth, "The Place of Theosis in Orthodox Theology, (Eds.) Michael J. Christensen and Jeffery A. Wittung, Partakers of the Divine Nature, (Grand Rapids, MI: baker Academic, 2007), 34-35.

68 Athanasius, Ibid, Section 20. He adds to this wisdom, "Wherefore virtue hath need at our hands of willingness alone, since it is in us and is formed from us. For when the soul hath its spiritual faculty in a natural state virtue is formed. And it is in a natural state when it remains as it came into existence. And when it came into existence it was fair and exceeding honest." (Ibid).
work (of Christ) is perfected, because men, redeemed from sin, no longer remain dead; but being deified, have in each other, by looking at Me, the bond of charity.  

Wesley's direct interaction with Athanasius is minimal, but in some ways telling. Along with Irenaeus, he includes him in a list of the early Church Fathers who concur with him regarding the doctrine of original sin.  

In "An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," Wesley not only labels Athanasius as "the great Athanasius," but also includes several quotes from Athanasius in terms of the latter's understanding of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. To do so, Wesley refers to Athanasius' "epistle to Serapion," and "his Oration against the Arians," without attempting to further elucidate the specific sections of each work.  

The Spirit is said to be an anointing and is a seal. John writes: The anointing which you have received from him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you, since, rather, his anointing teaches you about everything [1 Jn 2.27]. In the Prophet Isaiah it is written: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me [Is 61.1]. Paul says: In whom you who believe have also been sealed by the promised Holy Spirit [Eph 1.13]. And again a little further on he says: And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you who believe have been sealed for the day of redemption [Eph 4.30]. This anointing is the breath of the Son, so that he who hath the Spirit may say, 'We are the sweet-smelling savour of Christ'….  

Because we are partakers of the Holy Spirit, we have the Son: and having the Son, we have 'the Spirit, crying in our hearts, Abba, Father.'  

In borrowing from these sources, Wesley summarizes his observations from Athanasius.  

Is it not easy to be observed here, (1.) That Athanasius makes "that testimony of the Spirit" common to all the children of God: (2.) That he joins "the anointing of the Holy One," with that seal of the Spirit wherewith all that persevere are

70 Athanasius, "Four Discourses Against the Arians," Discourse III, Chapter XXV, Section 23, NPNF, Second Series, 4, 406.  
74 Wesley, Ibid,163; quoting from Athanasius, "Four Discourses Against the Arians," Discourse IV, Section 22, NPNF, Second Series, 4, 441.
"sealed to the day of redemption:" And, (3.) That he does not, throughout this passage, speak of the *extraordinary gifts* at all?\(^{75}\)

Wesley's reason for appealing to Athanasius was primarily to demonstrate that Church Antiquity, although at times referring to the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, in the main refers "to those ordinary operations of the Holy Spirit which all the children of God do and will experience, even to the end of the world."\(^{76}\) It is at this juncture, having built particularly on the foundation of Athanasius that Wesley goes on immediately to describe the ordinary operations of the Holy Spirit, and in so doing links Athanasius' understanding of the Holy Spirit to his own understanding of perfection.

What I mean by the ordinary operations of the Holy Ghost, I sum up in the words of a modern writer: \(^{77}\) "Sanctification being opposed to our corruption, and answering fully to the latitude thereof, whatsoever of holiness and perfection is wanting in our nature must be supplied by the Spirit of God. Wherefore, being by nature we are totally void of all saving truth, and under an impossibility of knowing the will of God;…this 'Spirit searcheth all things, yea, even the deep things of God,' and revealeth them unto the sons of men; so that thereby the darkness of their understanding is expelled, and they are enlightened with the knowledge of God…. The same Spirit which revealeth the object of faith generally to the universal church,…doth also illuminate the understanding of such as believe that they may receive the truth. For 'faith is the gift of God,' not only in the object, but also in the act. And this gift is a gift of the Holy Ghost working within us… And as the increase [and] perfection, so the original of faith is from the Spirit of God, by an internal illumination of the soul." \(^{78}\) "The second part of the office of the Holy Ghost is the renewing of man in all the parts and faculties of his soul. For our natural corruption consisting in an aversation [aversion] of our wills, and a depravation of our affections, an inclination of them to the will of God is wrought within us by the Spirit of God…."

The above summary of the ordinary operations of the Holy Spirit, although written as Wesley says by "a modern writer," carries within it Wesley's understanding of the sense of the

\(^{75}\) Wesley, Ibid, 163.


\(^{77}\) This is a reference to John Pearson (1613), master of Trinity College, Cambridge, bishop of Chester, and author of *An Exposition of the Creed* (1659) from which Wesley here quotes. He deliberately withholds Pearson's name until the end of the lengthy extract.

primitive church's view of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It so happens that the summary is written by an Anglican Divine, however that seems secondary to the intention of Wesley. Within the summary itself one finds the common vocabulary of Wesley and his theological heritage that began in the era of the Primitive Church and was mediated by the writing of John Pearson.  

C. Basil of Caesarea (330-379 A.D.)

Basil, the first of whom became known as the Cappadocian Fathers, was born into one of the remarkable families of Christian history. Although known for his defense of the deity of the Holy Spirit, "he and his younger brother Gregory of Nyssa (c. 330-c. 395) were very cautious in their application of explicit deification language." Basil did not simply dwell on the concept of deification, but did teach of a resemblance to God from creation as the basis of salvation through restoration. In his work "On The Spirit," Basil speaks of the Spirit's work in humanity as extinguishing the passions of the flesh, which have separated them from a close relationship to God. This purification or sanctifying element restores humanity to its pristine original image, and looks forward to the final restoration/outcome at the Eschaton. In speaking specifically regarding the Holy Spirit, Basil speaks of sanctification, power and in cautious terms, even perfection.

We are compelled to advance in our conceptions to the highest, and to think of an intelligent essence, in power infinite, in magnitude unlimited, unmeasured by times or ages, generous of It's good gifts, to whom turn all things needed for sanctification, after whom reach all things that live in virtue, as being watered by Its inspiration and helped on toward their natural and proper end; perfecting all other things, but Itself in nothing lacking;… origin of sanctification, light perceptible to the mind, supplying, as it were, through Itself, illumination to every faculty in the search for truth; by nature unapproachable, apprehended by

79 Specifically, the terms and phrases such as sanctification, holiness, perfection, enlightened with the knowledge of God, illumination of the soul, aversion of our wills connect Wesley to the Church Fathers considered to this point.  
80 Vladimir Kharlamov, "Theosis in Patristic Thought," Theological Reflections, #9, 2008, 157 [154-164].
reason of goodness, filling all things with Its power…. So, too, is the Spirit to every one who receives It, as though given to him alone, and yet It sends forth grace sufficient and full for all mankind, and is enjoyed by all who share It, according to the capacity, not of Its power, but of their nature… Now the Spirit is not brought into intimate association with the soul by local approximation…. This association results from the withdrawal of the passions which…have alienated it from its close relationship with God. Only then after a man is purified from the shame whose stain he took through his wickedness, and has come back again to his natural beauty, and as it were cleaning the Royal Image and restoring its ancient form, only thus is it possible for him to draw near to the Paraclete…. Through His aid hearts are lifted up, the weak are held by the hand, and they who are advancing are brought to perfection.  

For Basil, as for Wesley, there is little or no separation in time from sanctification to perfection. In Basil's language and theology one begins the journey into sanctification as a result of the purification produced by the Holy Spirit that frees a person from the shame of sin and allows that one to begin to restore and renew the image of God in their person. At the same time (although time is not the focus for Basil), a person enters into the practice of a life of virtue, through the illumination provided by the Holy Spirit, culminating ultimately in perfection.

In addressing what he terms "the ethical approach to theosis," Russell identifies this approach with the Cappadocian Fathers and summarizes their understanding of theosis as "the separation of the will from the passions, the practice of ceaseless prayer, the return of the soul to its original beauty, the attainment of a final god-like perfection, may be the gift of divine grace but must be accompanied by moral effort." In the first chapter of "On the Spirit," Basil lays out the optimal goal for the "wise hearer," who he considers of utmost value.

81 Basil, "On the Spirit," Chapter IX, Sections 22 and 23, NPNF, Second Series, Volume 8, 15. At the end of this section, Basil lifts the conversation to his eschatological vision. "Hence comes foreknowledge of the future, understanding of mysteries, apprehension of what is hidden, distribution of good gifts, the heavenly citizenship, a place in the chorus of angels, joy without end, abiding in God, the being made like to God, and highest of all, the being made God. Such, then…are the conceptions concerning the Holy Spirit…" "On the Spirit," Chapter IX, Section 23, Ibid. 16.

82 Russell, Fellow Workers with God, 26.
It is right, I ween, to hold him worthy of all approbation, and to urge him on to further progress, sharing his enthusiasm, and in all things toiling at his side as he presses onwards to perfection. To count the terms used in theology as of primary importance, and to endeavour to trace out the hidden meaning in every phrase and in every syllable, is a characteristic wanting in those who are idle in the pursuit of true religion, but distinguishing all who get knowledge of "the mark" "of our calling;" for what is set before us is, so far as is possible with human nature, to be made like unto God. Now without knowledge there can be no making like; and knowledge is not got without lessons…. The acquisition of true religion is just like that of crafts; both grow bit by bit; apprentices must despise nothing. If a man despise the first elements as small and insignificant, he will never reach the perfection of wisdom.\textsuperscript{83}

For Basil, the apprenticeship for perfection and perfected wisdom begins with the sacrament of baptism. As an initiation ritual, it both destroys sin and death by immersion in water and raises an individual up to life by the power of the Holy Spirit. "For this cause the Lord, who is the Dispenser of our life, gave us the covenant of baptism, containing a type of life and death, for the water fulfills the image of death, and the Spirit gives us the earnest of life."\textsuperscript{84} For Basil, baptism anticipates the resurrection from the dead, while at the same time commences for the Christian a life of training in virtue and godliness by the Holy Spirit, so as to become an imitator of Christ and an example to others regarding resurrection-like living prior to heaven. He speaks confidently of a life that is produced in us through the Holy Spirit, or living unto the Spirit, and having the fruit of holiness as a marker in our life.\textsuperscript{85}

So in training us for the life that follows on the resurrection the Lord sets out all the manner of life required by the Gospel, laying down for us the law of gentleness, of endurance of wrong, of freedom from the defilement that comes of the love of pleasure, and from covetousness, to the end that we may of set purpose win beforehand and achieve all that the life to come of its inherent nature possesses…. Through the Holy Spirit comes our restoration to paradise, our ascension into the kingdom of heaven, our return to the adoption of sons, our liberty to call God our Father, our being made partakers of the grace of Christ, our being called children of light, our sharing in eternal glory, and, in a

\textsuperscript{83} Basil, "On the Spirit," Chapter I, Section 2, Ibid, 2.
\textsuperscript{85} Basil, Ibid.
word, our being brought into a state of all "fullness of blessing," both in this world and in the world to come, of all the good gifts that are in store for us, by promise whereof, through faith, beholding the reflection of their grace as though they were already present, we await the full enjoyment.\footnote{Basil, Ibid, Sections 34 and 35.}

Basil paints with a wide brush the all-encompassing ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. His "grasp of the full range of the Holy Spirit's work in the life of the believers is perhaps the most exceptional in the ancient world."\footnote{Stanley M. Burgess, \textit{The Holy Spirit: Ancient Christian Traditions}, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), 139.} Basil's teaching regarding the Spirit demonstrates that the Spirit is active in every stage of the growth of the soul, either in purification, illumination or in perfection.\footnote{Ibid, 141.} Basil's understanding of the life of the human spirit in its journey towards God cannot be seen in isolation from his understanding of the Holy Spirit in terms of its nature and relationship with us. "The Holy Spirit is not only he \textit{in} whom the Christian believes, but he \textit{through} whom the Christian believes. In his light we see light."\footnote{Anthony Meredith, \textit{The Cappadocians}, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2000), 36.} At the same time, in his theology of baptism and spiritual progression Basil appears to view the Holy Spirit as more of a helper with sanctification than its actual cause\footnote{Christopher A. Beeley, "The Holy Spirit in the Cappadocians: Past and Present," \textit{Modern Theology}, 26:1, January 2010, 97 [90-119].} and further he "identifies the Holy Spirit primarily with the work of sanctification and the Christian's progress in virtue. In Basil's view human beings fulfill their purpose to become fully the image and likeness of God chiefly through the mastery of the passions."\footnote{Ibid, 96.}

Yet not all is clear in Basil's proclamation of the Holy Spirit. While articulating the Spirit as primarily the "helper" with sanctification, Basil also speaks strongly of two movements of divine grace that embrace the Holy Spirit in greater terms than simply a helper. Basil writes, "the Spirit is a Substance having life, gifted with supreme power of..."
sanctification." In this beginning interior work the Spirit awakens man to God in an ascending picture of gradualization, while at the same traverses a divine descent whereby the Spirit communicates the perfection of the Father's divine love and holiness.

And when, by means of the power that enlightens us, we fix our eyes on the beauty of the image of the invisible God, and through the image are led up to the supreme beauty of the spectacle of the archetype, then, I ween, is with us inseparably the Spirit of knowledge, in Himself bestowing on them that love the vision of the truth the power of beholding the Image, not making the exhibition from without, but in Himself leading on to the full knowledge.... Thus the way of the knowledge of God lies from One Spirit through the One Son to the One Father, and conversely the natural Goodness and the inherent Holiness and the royal Dignity extend from the Father through the Only-begotten to the Spirit.

What is clearer is that the Holy Spirit is the indispensible One by whom a person may contemplate the divine Word, who is in Himself the exact image of the Father. This Holy Spirit action however, is not simply exterior to human existence, but is an action that results in illumination and discovery of God at the deepest level of one's being. It appears from this angle that the work of the Holy Spirit is an interior work, accomplished or located within the soul that is being purified.

Basil clearly connects the work of the Holy Spirit with the sanctification or moral and intellectual perfecting of the individual believer. He underlines in no uncertain terms the perfective nature or character of the Spirit.

And in the creation bethink thee first, I pray thee, of the original cause of all things that are made, the Father; of the creative cause, the Son; of the perfecting cause, the Spirit; so that the ministering spirits subsist by the will of the Father, are brought into being by the operation of the Son, and perfected by the presence of the Spirit.... You are therefore to perceive three, the Lord who gives the order, the Word who creates, and the Spirit who confirms. And what other thing could confirmation be than the perfecting according to holiness?

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93 Basil, "On the Spirit," Chapter XVIII, Section 47, Ibid.
This perfecting expresses the confirmation's firmness, unchangeableness, and fixity in good. But there is no sanctification without the Spirit.\textsuperscript{94}

Wesley's direct referencing to Basil is also limited and muted. Whatever regard he has for the theology of Basil, Wesley is careful to hide his point of reference. His only direct quote from Basil is used to defend Wesley's view of Scripture versus tradition. Wesley records Basil as writing, "It is necessary even for novices to learn the Scriptures, that the mind may be well confirmed in piety, and that they may not be accustomed to human traditions."\textsuperscript{95} In this treatise, Wesley borrows for his defense quotes from many of the Church Fathers, using some Fathers more than once. However, his direct sourcing for Basil occurs only one time.\textsuperscript{96}

Nevertheless when Wesley does appeal to Basil it is always in a positive light, albeit generically. In his sermon, "On Laying the Foundation of the New Chapel," Wesley is effusive in his commendation of the Fathers of the primitive Church. His conclusion regarding the question "What is Methodism?" is that it is "no other than love, the love of God and of all mankind; the loving God with all our heart, and soul, and strength, as having first loved us,—as the fountain of all the good we have received, and of all we ever hope to enjoy."\textsuperscript{97} Wesley quickly adds that "This is the religion of the primitive Church, of the whole Church in the purest ages," and is affirmed "in the works of Chrysostom, Basil, Ephrem, Syrus, and Macarius."\textsuperscript{98}


\textsuperscript{95} Wesley, "A Roman Catechism, Faithfully Drawn out of the Allowed Writings of the Church of Rome, With a Reply Thereto," Works, Volume X, 92.

\textsuperscript{96} In sections I and II of "A Roman Catechism," Wesley quotes Jerome twice, Chrysostom once, Augustine twice, Clement of Alexandria once, Cyprian once, Gregory of Nazianzus once, Ambrose once, Origen once and Justin Martyr once.

\textsuperscript{97} Wesley, Sermon CXXXII, "On Laying the Foundation of the New Chapel," Works, Volume VII, 423.

\textsuperscript{98} Wesley, Ibid, 424. In the concluding section of this sermon, Wesley writes, "Are you an happy partaker of this scriptural, this truly primitive religion? Are you a witness of the religion of love? Are you a lover of God and mankind? … Do you long to have all men virtuous and happy? And does the constant tenor of your life and
Wesley, in defending himself against those who accused him of antinomianism and heresies, declares his affirmed position that justification does not negate good works in the life of a Christian. He then further substantiates his argument by appealing once again to selected Fathers of the Church.

Faith does not shut out repentance, hope, love, and the fear of God, to be joined with faith in every man that is justified: But it shutteth out from the office of justifying. So that although they be all present together in him that is justified, yet they justify not all together. Neither doth faith shut out good works, necessarily to be done afterwards, of duty towards God. That we are justified only by this faith in Christ, speak all the ancient authors; specially Origen, St. Cyprian, St. Chrysostom, Hilary, Basil, St. Ambrose, and St. Augustine.\footnote{Wesley, "A Letter to The Rev. Dr. Horne," \textit{Works}, Volume IX, 113.}

Although the theological ethos of Basil in its widest pneumatological expression finds parallels in Wesley's thought,\footnote{Those parallels will be part of Chapter 6 of this work. Some of these parallels lie in the life of virtue, the progressive nature of holiness, the distinction between the image and likeness of God in man and the notion of perfection.} it is difficult, given the paucity of references, to insist at this juncture on more than a passing influence between Wesley and Basil.


According to Boris Maslov, "The fact that Gregory of Nazianzus was only recently recognized as the first Christian writer to use the term \textit{theōsis} indicates a tendency among the historians of doctrine to overlook the signifier in their pursuit of the signified."\footnote{Boris Maslov, "The Limits of Platonism: Gregory of Nazianzus and the Invention of \textit{theōsis}," \textit{Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies}, 52 (2012), 441 [440-468].}

Gregory understands a Christian in terms of the larger idea of...theosis, or "divinization," the transforming participation of the human person in the being and life of God.... It was Gregory who established divinization as the primary
concept for salvation in Greek Christian tradition…and made the idea central to his work.102

Gregory followed Athanasius in his focus on the Incarnation as the keystone of salvation and deification. "While His inferior Nature, the Humanity, became God, because it was united to God, and became One Person…in order that I too might be made God so far as He is made Man."103 and at the same time, combined to this a moral-ascetical ascent ideal.104

The Word of God Himself…came to His own Image, and took on Him flesh, and mingled Himself with an intelligent soul for my soul's sake, purifying like by like; and in all points except sin was made man…. He came forth then as God with that which He has assumed, One Person in two Natures, Flesh and Spirit, of which the latter deified the former. O new commingling; O strange conjunction; the Self-Existent comes into being, the Uncreate is created, That which cannot be contained is contained, by the intervention of an intellectual soul, mediating between the Deity and corporeity of the flesh. And He Who gives riches becomes poor, for He assumes the poverty of my flesh, that I may assume the richness of His Godhead. He that is full empties Himself, for he empties Himself of His Glory for a short while, that I may have a share in His Fulness. What is the riches of His Goodness? What is this mystery that is around me? I had a share in the image; I did not keep it; He partakes of my flesh that he may both save the image and make the flesh immortal. He communicates a second Communion far more marvelous that the first…105

In Athanasian-like fashion, Gregory speaks of humanity's assumption of the deity of the Godhead and the fullness of the deity of the Son while at the same time communicates regarding the salvation of our primordial image and the possession of immortality. This

102 Christopher A. Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 116-117; "The key to Gregory's theology is the notion of…the ἀνάλυσις, his word for 'deification' through Christ and the imitation of Christ which effects it, through sacrament, through ascetic practice, through contemplation. Only the true theologian who approaches the task through the process of purification, humility and devotion is qualified to speak of the Triune God." Frances M. Young, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010, Second Edition), 164; see also Gregory Nazianzen, "Oration XXVII, *NPNF*, Second Series, Volume 7, 284-288.


104 Maslov, Ibid.

approach to deification is within the parameters of the Fathers who preceded Gregory and, at least in some measure, so is his insistence on humanity growing in virtue.

The ascent or development of virtue is based on the divine image in man, which inclines us to God and allows us to see and experience his splendor.

Now the Creator—Word…fashions Man; and taking a body from already existing matter, and placing in it a Breath taken from Himself which the Word knew to be an intelligent soul and the Image of God…. He placed him, great in littleness on the earth…. Fully initiated into the visible creation, but only partially into the intellectual….half-way between greatness and lowliness… A living creature trained here, and then moved elsewhere; and, to complete the mystery, deified by its inclination to God. For to this, I think, tends that Light of Truth which we here possess but in measure, that we should both see and experience the Splendour of God, which is worthy of Him Who made us, and will remake us again after a loftier fashion. This being He placed in Paradise…having honoured him with the gift of Free Will (in order that God might belong to him as the result of his choice, no less than to Him Who had implanted the seeds of it),…

This ascent of virtue or transformation commences at baptism. "Let the laver be not for your body only but also for the image of God in you; not merely a washing away of sins in you, but also a correction of your temper; let it not only wash away the old filth, but let it purify the fountainhead." Gregory speaks of Christ the Word recognizing three births within humanity, "namely, the natural birth, that of Baptism, and that of the Resurrection." He goes on to expound the impact that the second birth—baptism—has on the individual.

Illumination is the splendor of souls, the conversion of the life, the question put to the Godward conscience. It is the air to our weakness, the renunciation of the flesh, the following of the Spirit, the fellowship of the Word, the improvement of the creature, the overwhelming of sin, the participation of light, the dissolution of darkness. It is the carriage to God, the dying with Christ, the perfecting of the mind, the bulwark of Faith, the key of the Kingdom of heaven,

106 Gregory Nazianzen, "Oration XXXVIII, Section XI and XII, Ibid, 348.
107 Gregory Nazianzen, "Oration XL, The Oration on Holy Baptism," Section XXXII, NPNF, Second Series, Volume 7, 371; "For if He is not to be worshipped, how can He deify me by Baptism." The Fifth Theological Oration, On the Holy Spirit," Section XXVIII, Ibid, 327.
the change of life, the removal of slavery, the loosing of chains, the remodeling of the whole man. Why should I go into further detail? \(^{109}\)

Gregory is almost ecstatic in his descriptions of the Sacrament of Baptism and does not miss an opportunity to extol baptism as a Divine Gift, \(^{110}\) and that of grace and power, to the degree that the Sacrament results in "a purification of the sins of each individual, and a complete cleansing from all the bruises and stains of sin." \(^{111}\) However, in this same work Gregory instructs the baptized one how to resist the temptation of Satan to further sin after baptism. "You have the means to conquer him…. Say to him relying on the Seal, "I am myself the Image of God; I have not yet been cast down from the heavenly Glory, as thou wast through thy pride; I have put on Christ; I have been transformed into Christ by Baptism; worship thou me.""\(^{112}\)

It is important to Gregory that he encourages Christians, at whatever level of spiritual progress they may be. As a result, he regularly encourages and exhorts his audience to move to the next level of deification and purification. Consequently, Gregory constantly links this purification process to the imitation of Christ during His incarnation. There is nothing in Christ that cannot in turn be ultimately found in the Christian who sets his free will toward imitation and following. Gregory passionately pleads for those who follow Christ to,

"be crucified with Him, and share His Death and Burial gladly, that thou mayest rise with Him, and be glorified with Him and reign with Him. Look at and be looked at by the Great God, who in Trinity is worshipped and glorified, and Whom we declare to be now set forth as clearly before you as the chains of our flesh allow, in Jesus Christ our Lord, to Whom be the glory for ever. Amen."\(^{113}\)

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\(^{109}\) Gregory Nazianzen, "Oration XL," Section III, Ibid.

\(^{110}\) Gregory Nazianzen, "Oration XL," Section IV, Ibid.


\(^{113}\) Gregory Nazianzen, "Oration XXXVIII," Section XVIII, Ibid, 351.
The struggle for purification in Gregory is continuous and serious. As he hopes for the "transformation of the heavens, the transfiguration of the earth, the liberation of the elements, the renovation of the universe," he exhorts all to enter the narrow path of mortification.

Would that I might mortify my members that are upon the earth, would that I might spend my all upon the spirit, walking in the way that is narrow and trodden by few, not that which is broad and easy. For glorious and great are its consequences, and our hope is greater than our desert.... I am small and great, lowly and exalted, mortal and immortal, earthly and heavenly. I share one condition with the lower world, the other with God; one with the flesh, the other with the spirit. I must be buried with Christ, arise with Christ, be joint heir with Christ, become the son of God, yea, God Himself.... This is the purpose of the great mystery for us. This is the purpose for us of God, Who for us was made man and became poor, to raise our flesh, and recover His image, and remodel man, that we might all be made one in Christ, who was perfectly made in all of us all that He Himself is, that we might...bear in ourselves only the stamp of God, by Whom and for Whom we were made, and have so far received our form and model from Him, that we are recognized by it alone.  

He speaks with an invective tone regarding those who do not ascend to deification because of their unresolved depravity on this earth, while at the same time clearly placing a limit on human deification because of man's human nature. Additionally, in his enthusiasm to declare his truth Gregory sometimes clouds the line between the possibility of deification in this life versus in the life to come.

Whoever has been permitted to escape by reason and contemplation from matter and this fleshly cloud or veil (whichever it should be called) and to hold communion with God and be associated, as far as man's nature can attain, with the purest Light, blessed is he, both from his ascent from hence, and for his deification there, which is conferred by true philosophy, and by rising superior to the dualism of matter, through the unity which is perceived in the Trinity. And whosoever has been depraved by being knit to the flesh, and so far oppressed by the clay that he cannot look at the rays of truth, nor rise above things below, though he is born from above, and called to things above, I hold

115 Gregory Nazianzen, Ibid, Section 23, 237.
him to be miserable in his blindness, even though he may abound in things of this world,...

Gregory's consuming passion and desire is deification. As such, periodically one can detect Gregory's self-conscious hesitation as he pushes the envelope, as it were, to prove his point and passion.

I dare to utter something, O Trinity; and may pardon be granted to my folly, for the risk is to my soul. I too am an Image of God, of the Heavenly Glory, though I be placed on earth. I cannot believe that I am saved by one who is my equal. If the Holy Ghost is not God, let Him first be made God, and then let Him deify me His equal.

Wesley's use of Gregory, at least at this juncture, is not overt or direct, given Wesley's paucity of references to Gregory. At the same time, what can be said is that on the surface the parallels between Wesley and Gregory in terms of sanctification and theosis appear to this author to be greater than any of the previously mentioned Church Fathers. This similarity is not due to Wesley's direct referencing of Gregory, because Wesley chooses to quote Gregory only once, and in a context where Wesley was looking for support against the doctrine of purgatory.

The similarity is due, in my mind, to the flow of their thought, including perhaps the inconsistencies of such, especially as it relates to "ethical perfection."

E. Gregory of Nyssa (330-395 A.D.).

It is with Gregory of Nyssa that one encounters the most profound and philosophical of the Cappadocians. He "is widely regarded as the most substantial thinker and theologian among the Cappadocians and is often used as the representative of Greek Trinitarian

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Although Gregory of Nyssa is cautious in his divinization language, nevertheless such language is present as his understanding of divinization. Gregory underlines the Incarnation as the beginning point of the transformation that humanity is invited to participate: "a transformation of the human into the divine which does not seem to involve, in his view, an annihilation of human nature, so much as the suffusion of all its naturally changeable, "fleshly" characteristics with the stability and luminous vigour of God." In defending the perfection of Christ, Gregory opines on the impossibility of our Lord not being "perfected in every kind of good," and in so doing, offers a negative illustration which in fact elucidates the participation needed by imperfect humanity in the process of deification.

For as long as a nature is in defect as regards the good, the superior existence exerts upon this inferior one a ceaseless attraction towards itself: and this craving for more will never stop: it will be stretching out to something not yet grasped: the subject of this deficiency will be always demanding a supply, always altering into the grander nature, and yet will never touch perfection, because it cannot find a goal to grasp, and cease its impulse upward. The First Good is in its nature infinite, and so it follows of necessity that the participation in the enjoyment of it will be infinite also, for more will be always being grasped, and yet something beyond that which has been grasped will always be discovered, and this search will never overtake its Object, because its fund is as inexhaustible as the growth of that which participates in it is ceaseless.

Gregory of Nyssa holds out an unlimited optimism regarding human growth or ascendency into deification. Gregory speaks of perfection in virtue as that which is present and future, yet at the same time eternally ongoing. Perfection cannot be attained, but that is because "in the case of virtue we have learned from the Apostle that one limit of perfection is the fact that it has no

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limit."\footnote{Gregory of Nyssa, "The Life of Moses," Ibid, 30.5. Anthony Meredith offers this explanation regarding Nyssa's view of virtue. "Religious virtue is divided into two parts, that which concerns God and that which concerns right conduct. This refusal to divorce right conduct from correct belief, sets Gregory apart from pagan religion, on the one side, which seems to have practiced a form of amoral worship, and from those Christian writers on the other, who seem to have thought that a stage could be arrived at after which virtue ceased to matter or to be demanded, simply because it was already firmly possessed." Anthony Meredith, \textit{Gregory of Nyssa}, (New York, NY: Routledge, 1999), 100.} Whereas previous Fathers have expressed humanity's limited capacity in terms of theosis (e.g. up to their capacity or as it is within us), Gregory knows of no such boundary as he speaks of the inexhaustible growth potential of humanity. Nyssa goes on to teach that the Christian who follows their Christ leader, even at the best of moments, must recognize that "their nature does not admit of an exact and entire imitation, but it receives now as much as it is capable of receiving, while it reserves the remainder for the time that comes after."\footnote{Gregory of Nyssa, "The Great Catechism," Chapter XXXV, \textit{NPNF}, Second Series, 5, 503. In the same chapter, Gregory adds, "In what, then, does this imitation consist? It consists in the effecting the suppression of that admixture of sin, in the figure of mortification that is given by the water, not certainly a complete effacement, but a kind of break in the continuity of the evil, two things concurring to this removal of sin—the penitence of the transgressor and his imitation of the death." Ibid. On occasion, Gregory obscures this unlimited potential view, even within the same context, when he insists that the Christian who follows their Christ leader, even in their best moments, must recognize that "their nature does not admit of an exact and entire imitation, but it receives now as much as it is capable of receiving, while it reserves the remainder for the time that comes after." Gregory of Nyssa, "The Great Catechism," Ibid.}

It is this unlimited potential for humanity that helps explain that although incarnationally oriented, Nyssa's transformational theology finds its roots in his anthropology. He was perhaps the most optimistic of all the Fathers in his view of man. God, out of what Nyssa terms "the superabundance of love,"\footnote{Gregory of Nyssa, "The Great Catechism," Chapter 5, \textit{NPNF}, Second Series, Volume 5, 478.} chose to create man so that man could "be a partaker of the good things of God."\footnote{Ibid.} As Nyssa frames it,

"...the eternal power of God which is creative of things that are, the discoverer of things that are not, the sustaining cause of things that are brought into being...has been shown...to be the Maker of the nature of man.... For needful it was that neither His light should be unseen, nor His glory without witness, nor His goodness unenjoyed, nor that any other quality [my emphasis] observed in the Divine nature should in any case lie idle, with none to share it or enjoy it. If, therefore, man comes to his birth upon these conditions,... necessarily he is..."
framed of such a kind as to be adapted to the participation of such good... so was it needful that a certain affinity with the Divine should be mingled with the nature of man, in order that by means of this correspondence it might aim at that which was native to it.... Thus, then, it was needful for man, born for the enjoyment of Divine good, to have something in his nature akin to that in which he is to participate. For this end he has been furnished with life, with thought, with skill, and with all the excellences that we attribute to God, in order that by each of them he might have his desire set upon that which is not strange to him... In truth... man was made "in the image of God." For in this likeness, implied in the word image, there is a summary of all things that characterize Deity.  

It appears from the above that Gregory did not distinguish between "image" and "likeness" but did place a high value on man's free will. "For He who made man for the participation of His own peculiar good... would never have deprived him of that most excellent and precious of all good; I mean the gift implied in being his own master, and having a free will." Yet with the gift came risk. That risk was optimized in the Fall when "God... perceived in our created nature the bias towards evil, and the fact that after its voluntary fall... it would acquire a fellowship with the lower nature, He mingled, for this reason, with His own image an element of the irrational..." Although the Fall had serious and significant consequences for humanity, it was not viewed by Gregory as a catastrophic loss of the capacity for divinity. Despite humanity's devolvement and subsequent linkage to "passion" and our "animal nature," this simply signals to Gregory that "the Divine image does not at once shine forth at our formation, but brings man to perfection by a certain method and sequence." That method and sequence is directly tied to the voluntary pursuit of virtue versus vice. "Was it not, then, most right that that which is in every detail made like the Divine should possess in its nature a self-ruling and

126 Ibid, 478-479.  
127 Gregory of Nyssa, Ibid, 479.  
independent principle, such as to enable the participation of good to be the reward of its
virtue?" In his fifth sermon on the Lord's Prayer, as the subject of forgiveness is introduced
in the prayer, Gregory declares that one has come "to the very peak of virtue." The
individual who desires to approach God does so, in part, through the act of forgiveness.

Such man is almost no longer shown in terms of human nature, but, through
virtue, is likened to God Himself, so that he seems to be another god, in that he
does those things that God alone can do... If... a man imitates in his own life the
characteristics of the Divine Nature, he becomes... that which he visibly
imitates.... And if a man is free from everything that comes under the idea of
evil he becomes, so to speak, a god by his very way of life, since he verifies in
himself what reason finds in the Divine Nature. Do you realize to what height
the Lord raises His hearers through the words of the prayer, by which He
somehow transforms human nature into what is Divine? For he lays down that
those who approach God should themselves become gods.

Still, Gregory himself admits his own lack of perfection. "I am at an equal loss about both
things: It is beyond my power to encompass perfection in my treatise or to show in my life the
insights of the treatise.... Many great men, even those who excel in virtue, will admit that for
them such an accomplishment is unattainable." When it comes to the Sacraments, Nyssa views the Sacrament of Baptism as critical for
participation in deification. However he reserves his richest Sacramental theology for the
Eucharist. Viewing the compounded soul and body of man, Gregory acknowledges the
difficulty of each component "laying hold of" or coming "into fellowship and blending with the
Author of our salvation" since both "have taken poison" through the sin of Eve. He asks and

then answers his own question as to how this plight can be corrected. His answer and antidote are found in the Eucharist.

An antidote entering within us may, by its own counter-influence, undo the mischief introduced into the body by the poison. What, then, is this remedy to be? Nothing else than that very Body which has been shown to be superior to death, and has been the First-fruits of our life. So…that body to which immortality has been given it by God, when it is in ours, translates and transmutes the whole into itself….and…the God who was manifested infused Himself into perishable humanity for this purpose, viz. that by this communion with Deity mankind might at the same time be deified, for this end it is that, by dispensation of His grace, He disseminates Himself in every believer through that flesh, whose substance comes from bread and wine, blending Himself with the bodies of believers to secure that, by this union with the immortal, man, too, may be a sharer in incorruption.  

For Nyssa, it is the Holy Spirit who "transforms the various common or material elements through His sanctifying power." As a result, man by partaking of the Sacrament is himself transformed by the sanctifying of the Spirit. It is not the elements themselves that provide the gift of spiritual rebirth, but the presence of the Holy Spirit sacramentally. In addition to providing the grace for rebirth, Gregory also asserts that in baptism the Spirit begins to flow within the Christian, enabling that one to begin the life of virtue.

Ultimately Gregory concludes as optimistically as he begins the account of creation by asserting "that the Resurrection is the reconstitution of our nature in its original form [original emphasis]…. Man was a thing divine before his humanity got within reach of the assault of evil."

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137 Gregory of Nyssa, Ibid, 504, 505, 506.  
Wesley, as will be demonstrated, shows close affinity with Gregory of Nyssa's theology, yet strangely, does not reference him at all. However, as the last chapter of this work will demonstrate, lack of direct citation does not necessarily mean lack of influence.


John Chrysostom was born in Antioch to a prosperous family. He was to spend almost fifty years of his life there and was later designated Chrysostom, or Golden Mouth, because of his dazzling effectiveness as a pulpit orator.\textsuperscript{141} Chrysostom was deeply concerned with the moral life of the people of Antioch. According to Kelly “The citizens of Antioch had a reputation for pleasure-seeking, worldliness, fickleness and cynicism; among other diversions they had a passion for horse-racing and the theatre,…”\textsuperscript{142} Into this cultural morass, Chrysostom began by understanding Christian perfection in terms of the philosophic ideals of detachment and otherworldliness; but then, like Basil, he realized that to be like God meant love and generosity towards other human beings…. To love meant to be involved; but it also meant detachment from the selfish passions associated with sex, with the possession of riches and with worldly success. Christian perfection was to be the aim of all believers, whether or not they withdrew from the battle and distraction of city life…. Throughout his…life, his constant problem was living and preaching his puritanical ideals as the standard for all Christians in the world. Simplicity, purity, holiness, an independence of worldly good and concerns, concern rather for the poor and the kingdom of heaven—such are the recurring themes of Chrysostom's exhortations…\textsuperscript{143}

Given such an approach, Chrysostom's "contribution to pneumatology…is limited to the influence of the Spirit on human ethical behavior."\textsuperscript{144} Yet even given the lack of explicit deification language, Chrysostom does invoke the process of theosis through other terms and

\textsuperscript{142} Kelley, Ibid, 3.
\textsuperscript{143} Frances M. Young and Andrew Teal, \textit{From Nicaea to Chalcedon}, 208-209.
\textsuperscript{144} Burgess, Ibid, 123-124. Russell, \textit{Fellow Workers with God}, 68n5. At the same time, by the middle of the fourth century, deification was commonly understood with a heavy emphasis on the incarnational aspect of Christ's humanity assuming flesh and thus deifying it in the hypostatic union, while also raising the specter of the potential
several of his theological concerns and emphases lean in the direction of deification. More than any of the Fathers preceding him, Chrysostom spent an inordinate amount of energy extricating the roles of the Holy Spirit out of the text of the Acts of the Apostles. In his view, "The Gospels, then, are a history of what Christ did and said; but the Acts, of what that "other Comforter" said and did." It is in the corpus of his homilies on the Acts of the Apostles where one can clearly see his deification leanings. In speaking of the root of evil within humanity, Chrysostom is clear.

How then may one root out this evil passion...this violent fever? Let us see whence it had its birth, and let us remove the cause. Whence is it wont to arise? From arrogance and much haughtiness. This cause then let us remove, and the disease is removed together with it.... And who....is ignorant of his own nature? Many: perhaps all, save a few.... For, tell me, what is man?.... Man can become God, and a child of God. For we read, "I have said, Ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High." (Ps. lxxii.6). And what is greater, the power to become both God and angel and child of God is put into his own hands.... In a word, it is virtue which makes angels: but this is in our power: therefore we are able to make angels, though not in nature, certainly in will. For indeed if virtue be absent, it is no advantage to be an angel by nature;....so....if we are ignorant of our own nature, we shall despise it much: but if we know what it is, we shall exhibit much zeal, and reap the greatest profits.... There is nothing therefore to hinder us from becoming nigh to the angels, if we will. Let us then will it, let us will it...

In some measure, as seen in the above quote, Chrysostom appears to lean strongly toward a self-willed deification where will and virtue allow the appropriate ascent. Yet he was "well

of human deification. As a result, the body of Christ became life-giving flesh, which assisted in empowering Christians to transformative metamorphosis. "The sacramental implications of this are not lost on the patristic theologians, especially John Chrysostom (who in his Eucharistic doctrine most nearly approximates to the concept of theosis he otherwise avoids"). J. A. McGuckin, "The Strategic Adaptation of Deification in the Cappadocians," Ibid, 11n.12. In his sermon "Eutropius, and the Vanity of Riches," Chrysostom demonstrates the titular notion of deification when he comments, "There are divine names, and there are human names. God has received from me, and He Himself hath given to me.... What kind of names hath He received from me, and what kind hath He given to me? He Himself is God, and He hath called me God; with Him is the essential nature as an actual fact, with me only the honour of the name: 'I have said ye are gods, and ye are all children of the most highest.' Here are words, but in the other case there is the actual reality. He hath called me god, for by that name I have received honour." (Chrysostom, "Eutropius, and the Vanity of Riches," Homily II, NPNF, Second Series, Volume 9, 257).

aware that in the achievement of salvation neither God's grace nor human effort was sufficient without the other." In answering the question, "what burdensome command have we enjoined?" John, after speaking to several biblical commands, responds to the question: "None of these things is wearisome if thou hast but the will. For everything depends on the will after the grace [emphasis mine] from above. Let us will good things that we may attain also to the good things eternal, in Christ Jesus our Lord..." In his work on Hebrews 13.17, he reminds his audience, "Seest thou how he shows that virtue is born neither wholly from God, nor yet from ourselves alone?" Later in the same Homily, Chrysostom provides a full illustration of the synergistic cooperation of human will and divine grace.

First by saying, 'make you perfect in every good work'; Ye have virtue indeed, he means, but need to be made complete.... "According to His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight." "In His sight," he says. For this is the highest virtue, to do that which is well-pleasing in the sight of God.... "They of Italy salute you. Grace be with you all. Amen." But how does "Grace" come to be "with" us? If we do not do despite to the benefit, if we do not become indolent in regard to the Gift. And what is "the grace"? Remission of sins, Cleansing: this is "with"us.... How then shall the "Grace be with" thee, whether it be the good favor, or the effectual working of the SPIRIT? If thou draw it to thee by good deeds. For the cause of all good things is this, the continual abiding with us of the "grace" of the Spirit.

It was important to Chrysostom that his people understand their gift of free will and that God, even in His mercy, will not force their hand. He argues repeatedly that the lack of free will would amount to forced devotion and obedience, which is contrary to God's nature and illogical in terms of humanity's free response to Divine grace.

147 Young, From Nicaea to Chalcedon, 212.
149 John Chrysostom, "Homilies on Hebrews," Homily XXXIV, Section 6, Ibid, 520.
151 See John Chrysostom, "Homilies on St. John," Homily X, Section 1, NPNF, Second Series, Volume 14, 35.
According to Chrysostom, God does not necessarily anticipate man's own volitions or subjects of will, but when these are actually turned in the proper direction, God's grace powerfully assists them; and without this divine cooperation, holiness is not possible. Yet again, in a Homily on Hebrews, Chrysostom asks and answers his own question.

What then? Does nothing depend on God? All indeed depends on God, but not so that our free-will is hindered. 'If then it depend on God,' (one says), 'why does He blame us?' On this account I said, 'so that our free-will is not hindered.' It depends then on us, and on Him. For we must first choose the good; and then He leads us to His own. He does not anticipate our choice, lest our free-will should be outraged. But when we have chosen, then great is the assistance he brings to us.

Although continually driving home the point of a life of virtue and effort, while also exhorting his readers of the dangers of neglecting the gift of salvation/sanctification, there are still opportunities within the context of failure, to return to the life of virtue. In a very moving section, Chrysostom demonstrates pastoral grace as he encourages those Christians who have despaired of spiritual life.

What then (you say)? Is there no repentance? There is repentance, but there is no second baptism: but repentance there is, and it has great force, and is able to set free from the burden of his sins, if he will, even him that hath been baptized much in sins, and to establish in safety him who is in danger, even though he should have come unto the very depth of wickedness…. What then is the medicine of Repentance? And how is it made up? First, of the condemnation of our own sins;… Secondly, of great humbleness of mind…. And after humbleness of mind, there is need of intense prayers, of many tears, tears by day, and tears by night… And after prayer thus intense, there is need of much

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153 John Chrysostom, "Homilies on Hebrews," Homily XII, Section 5, Ibid, 425. See also his "Homilies on Hebrews, Homily XVII, Ibid, 446; Chrysostom, "Homilies on St. John," Homily X, Section 2, NPNF, Second Series, Volume 14, 36-37). Chrysostom was preeminently concerned with the moral life of holiness among Christians. That moral life assisted them upward to their call to perfection or deification. Nevertheless, Chrysostom, was not as interested in defining an order of salvation as he was in emphasizing the way of salvation, meaning that the beginning of salvation through faith and baptism, although clearly a subject of focus, could not be separated or compartmentalized without speaking of sanctification and holiness in the same breath.
154 "For it is not merely freedom from sins which makes a man holy, but also the presence of the Spirit, and the wealth of good works." Chrysostom, "Homilies on Hebrews," Homily XVII, NPNF, Second Series, Volume 14, 450.
almmsgiving: for this it is which especially gives strength to the medicine of repentance…. Next not being angry with any one, nor bearing malice; the forgiving all their trespasses….. Also, the converting our brethren from their wandering…. Now then, before you learned that it is possible to have our sins washed away by means of repentance, were ye not in agony, because there is no second laver, and were ye not in despair of yourselves.  

Chrysostom's trustful dependence on the grace of God, coupled with his firm conviction of the free capacity of humanity to choose to turn to what is good, is what enabled him to couch his exhortations to Christian holiness in such hopeful words. "To his sanguine temperament it seemed as if man's natural capacities for good, aided by grace obtained through prayer, could accomplish anything."

This outlook was partially adopted because of Chrysostom's positive anthropology. As a result of the Fall, man was deprived of immortality and divine wisdom that he had previously been gifted, yet his nature was not essentially changed, it was only weakened.

Chrysostom viewed the Incarnation as the Divine beginning point for deification. According to McCormick, "The incarnation not only revealed God to humankind; it also revealed authentic humanity to humankind…. For Chrysostom, it made no sense to speak of God as becoming flesh if humankind could not become divine."

For He became Son, who was God's own Son, in order that He might make the sons of men to be children of God. For the high when it associates with the low touches not at all its own honor, while it raises up the other from its excessive lowness; and even thus it was with the Lord. He in nothing diminished His own Nature by this condescension, but raised us, who had always sat in disgrace and darkness, to glory unspeakable…. Our nature had fallen an incurable fall, and needed only that mighty Hand. There was no possibility of raising it again, had

not He who fashioned it at first stretched forth to it His Hand, and stamped it anew with His Image, by the regeneration of water and the Spirit.\textsuperscript{159}

Our nature then, could not have been elevated to the divine if Christ had not truly partaken of it, or assumed it. Remaining what He was by Nature, Christ took that which He was not, but having become flesh, He still remained God, being the Word. The one He became He took or assumed, the other He was from eternity.\textsuperscript{160} Ultimately, begun at the Incarnation, the sacrifice on the Cross leads to the reconciliation of God the Father because humanity, through the offering of the sacrifice of Christ, becomes pure again and therefore ready to receive within himself the coming or parousia of the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{161}

Finally, like Wesley, it should be noted that Chrysostom often uses therapeutic language when he speaks of human nature as diseased and in need of healing,\textsuperscript{162} the medicine of repentance,\textsuperscript{163} sin that needs to be cured,\textsuperscript{164} physicians of the soul,\textsuperscript{165} and wounds that need to be cleansed.\textsuperscript{166} Although he does utilize forensic language when speaking of salvation leading to sanctification, His default language is therapeutic in emphasis.

Wesley, as he does with most of the other Greek Fathers, seems to disguise his fondness for Chrysostom. His references to him are certainly positive, and a number reflect directly on the doctrine of pneumatology, and tangentially even address the doctrine of perfection or theosis. In his work "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," Wesley

\textsuperscript{163} Chrysostom, "Homilies on Second Corinthians," Homily V, Section 7, \textit{NPNF}, Second Series, Volume 12, 300; See also Homily XV, Section 2, Ibid, 351; "Homilies on Hebrews," Homily XVII, Ibid, 448.
\textsuperscript{164} Chrysostom, "Homilies on Hebrews," Homily XXXI, Ibid, 508; see also "Homily XVII," Ibid, 448.
\textsuperscript{165} Chrysostom, "Homilies on Hebrews," Homily XXI, Ibid, 461.
is attempting to deflect the attacks on the Methodist movement which were by 1744 increasing in number and in rancor. Wesley's purpose in writing was clearly apologetic and was directed toward "the doctrines I teach, partly to my manner of teaching them, and partly to the effects which are supposed to follow from teaching these doctrines in this manner." Wesley goes on to defend his notion that "the unction of the Holy One" or Holy Spirit is not restricted to the Apostles, but is also the property and possession "of all Christians in all ages." The protagonist in the dialogue supports his view as being supported by the Primitive Church, including John Chrysostom. Wesley then turns to Chrysostom's commentary on John 14:26 to add to his own argument and point of view.

Such is the grace (of the Comforter) that if it finds sadness, it takes it away; if evil desire it consumes it. It casts out fear, and suffers him that receives it to be a man no longer, but translates him, as it were, into heaven. Hence 'none of them counted anything his own', but 'continued in prayer, with gladness and singleness of heart'. For this chiefly is there need of the Holy Ghost. For the fruit of the Spirit is joy, peace, faith, meekness. Indeed spiritual men often grieve; but that grief is sweeter than joy. For whatever is of the Spirit is the greatest gain, as whatever is of the world is the greatest loss. Let us therefore in keeping the commandments (according to our Lord's exhortation, verse 15) secure the unconquerable assistance of the Spirit, and we shall be nothing inferior to angels.

From this Wesley deduces that "St. Chrysostom, here, after he had shown that the promise of the Comforter primarily belonged to the Apostles…undeniably teaches that in a secondary sense, it belongs to all Christians; to all spiritual men, all who keep the commandments." What is intriguing about Chrysostom's quote is that in the concluding

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169 Wesley, when quoting Chrysostom, skips several lines from the original work without indicating that such is the case. The omission, intentional or not, does not affect the meaning of the quotation, but is an example of Wesley's sometimes inexact methodology.
171 Wesley, Ibid, 155-156.
discourse of the same passage, Chrysostom argues that "just men…whatever were their righteous deeds, did them while dwelling on earth…as pilgrims and strangers; but in heaven, as citizens." Further, their flesh was not viewed as a negating factor in living a life of virtue, but "a careless soul" was the source of a just person's failure to live a life of virtue in the journey of deification. Clearly, in this instance, Chrysostom's understanding of the synergy of works (virtue) and deification were within the purview of Wesley's reading although he did not formally continue the quotation of Chrysostom that speaks to this.

The same pattern can be observed elsewhere within the same work of Wesley. As he continues to defend the work of the Holy Spirit as a part of the life of all Christians, Wesley offers an extended expositional commentary from Chrysostom, based on Romans 8.14. As part of the quotation Wesley reproduced the original Greek text "to indicate that he had consulted the original—which apparently he felt that" his adversary had not.

It is noted that within the immediate context of Chrysostom's words—as used by Wesley—Chrysostom again offers wisdom and instruction on the work of the Spirit in terms of a Christian's life of faith. He speaks of "being Christ's, having Christ himself, vying with the Angels…and running with ease the race of virtue." He reminds his audience of their responsibility to "keep continually mortifying" their body "in its inclinations towards evil doings," as they depend upon "a continual abiding" of the Holy Spirit. Certainly this synergistic approach to a life of holiness (virtue) resonated with Wesley, although he does not acknowledge this. Chrysostom, in pre-Wesley language, goes on in his discourse to speak of

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172 John Chrysostom, Ibid, 278.
173 John Chrysostom, "The Epistle to the Romans," Homily XIV, NPNF, Second Series, Volume 11, 441-442, cited by Wesley, Ibid, 157-158. This quotation, like the previous one, is severely truncated by Wesley.
174 Wesley, Ibid, 158, note 2.
176 John Chrysostom, Ibid.
the need to root out "this disease" so that "receiving the true riches, and being set free….thou mayest obtain the present blessings, and those to come, by the grace and love toward man, etc."\textsuperscript{177} This pursuit of holiness, or "the way of virtue" is made easier when one recognizes that what God is doing for us through the abiding Spirit is "not a matter of debt, but of mere grace."\textsuperscript{178}

Wesley again borrows the support of Chrysostom, in passing, by affirming that he and other ancient Fathers support the fact that "neither doth faith shut out good works, necessarily to be done afterwards, of duty towards God."\textsuperscript{179} Further, Wesley offers a passing reference to Chrysostom, without quotation, indicating that Chrysostom supported the conclusion that miracles of healing and raising the dead had ceased due to the lack of faith, virtue and piety in his time.\textsuperscript{180} Wesley, in his sermon "Christian Perfection," appeals yet again to Chrysostom in commenting on St. Paul's thorn in the flesh. Wesley is attempting to prove that no person must commit sin, and in bolstering his case he actually misrepresents Chrysostom's opinion as to the identity of St. Paul's "thorn in the flesh."\textsuperscript{181} In answering the question, "What is Methodism," Wesley is careful to invoke the authority of the Primitive Church on his behalf and included within their testimony, Chrysostom is mentioned as one who would have affirmed the tenets of Methodism, which Wesley declares include "no other than love: the love of God and of all

\textsuperscript{177} John Chrysostom, Ibid, 439.
\textsuperscript{178} John Chrysostom, "The Epistle to the Romans," Homily XIV, Ibid, 439.
\textsuperscript{179} Wesley, "Letter to The Rev. Dr. Horne," \textit{Works}, Volume IX, 113.
\textsuperscript{181} Wesley, "Christian Perfection," Sermon 40, \textit{Works} (BCE), Volume 2, 113. Wesley indicates that Chrysostom concurs with Tertullian in identifying the thorn as a headache, when in fact, Chrysostom attributes the thorn as meaning "the blows, the bonds, the chains, the imprisonments, the being dragged about, and maltreated, and tortured by the scourges of public executioners." John Chrysostom, "Letters to Olympias, \textit{NPNF}, Second Series, Volume 9, 295.
mankind; the loving God with all our heart, and soul, and strength, as having first loved us, as the fountain of all the good we have received…”182 Wesley, in very Eastern terms, continues:

This love is the great medicine of life, the never-failing remedy...for all the miseries and vices of men. Wherever this is, there are virtue and happiness, going hand in hand. There is humbleness of mind, gentleness, long-suffering, the whole image of God, and at the same time a peace that passeth all understanding, with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. This religion of love, and joy, and peace has its seat in the inmost soul, but is ever showing itself by its fruits, continually springing up…in every kind of beneficence, spreading virtue and happiness all around it.183

Wesley's remaining mentions of Chrysostom are non-descript and ancillary and add no significance to his view of theosis. It is apparent, however, that even within the average scope of Wesley's use of Chrysostom there are observable similarities in emphases and language.

G. Macarius the Egyptian (300-390 A.D.).

Macarius, whom Wesley incorrectly assumed he was reading in the Spiritual Homilies, was one of the most revered of the desert Fathers.184 According to Anthony Meredith, "The Collection of Homilies, ascribed to Macarius of Egypt, in reality probably comes not from Egypt but from what is now Iraq."185 The Homilies themselves "were written in Greek at the end of the fourth century, but we do not… know…who the author of the Macarian Homilies was. He was certainly not Macarius the Great of Egypt, though it was under the latter's name that his writings were eventually to find a safe haven."186 "Macarius" then is the pseudonym of

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183 Wesley, Ibid, 585.
184 Johannes Quasten, Patrology, Volume III, 162.
a monk who was active between the years 380 and 430, and who lived in the desert regions of Asia Minor, Syria or Iraq and who, by all accounts "can fairly be called the most influential of the fourth century monastic writers." According to Kallistos Ware,

Beneath an ever-varying imagery, evocative and colorful, the basic message of Macarius is very simple. Our spiritual journey falls into three main stages: 1. Initially the heart is under the dominion of evil. This is a consequence of Adam's disobedience: the Homilies take a somber view of the fall, and place heavy emphasis on the reality of inherited human sinfulness…. Although humans do not altogether forfeit freedom of the will, evil is pervasive and stubborn, and cannot be overcome without the assistance of divine grace. 2. Next comes the stage of spiritual struggle, when the heart is indwelt simultaneously by both sin and grace, the one fighting against the other…. 3. Finally there comes the stage when sin is cast out from the heart by the Holy Spirit, working in cooperation with our human will. Cleansed from evil, the soul is now united to Christ the heavenly Bridegroom and is "mixed" or "mingled" with the divine Spirit, in this way attaining a state higher than that enjoyed by Adam before the fall…. Macarius describes this third stage as "dispassion" or "freedom from passions" (apatheia), as "renewal above nature" or "new creation," and also "divinization." Yet even so a person still continues subject to temptation and liable to fall…. There is no inalienable perfection in this present life.

The third stage of humanity's journey is a prominent theme within the Macarian corpus, particularly his concern with the ongoing presence of evil or sin within the person's soul, even as that person moves toward deification. Macarius is careful not to dismiss the place of evil within the life of a Christian, while at the same time affirming that there is hope with this battle through the role of the Holy Spirit. Part of the hope that Macarius offers to humanity emerges from his positive anthropology. "Great is the dignity of man…. Man…is of more value than all created things…even than the ministering spirits. It was not of Michael and Gabriel…that He said, Let us make them after Our image and likeness, but about the spiritual substance of man, I

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187 Ibid.
189 Arthur James Mason, Fifty Spiritual Homilies of St. Macarius the Egyptian, Homily XXVII, Section 20, (New York, NY: The MacMillan Company, 1921), 211. Unless otherwise noted, all future references to the Homilies taken from this text will be listed as Homilies followed only by the Homily number, section and page.
mean his immortal soul." Again, Macarius demonstrates his elevated anthropology when he writes, "when you hear of the dignity of the soul, how precious the intelligent substance is, you do not understand that it was not of angels, but of human nature, that He said, *Let us make after Our image and likeness…* In *The Great Letter*, Macarius is unwavering in his claim that God creates only that which is good. "God is the Creator of only clean and very good natures," is his thesis, so that he can identify Satan, after the Fall, as the instrument of evil who "clothed the soul and all its substance with sin," to the point that "the entire soul was subjected to the passions of evil and sin," and "not one part of the soul or the body is immune from the passions of sin dwelling in us." While speaking of the pre-fall Adam, Macarius declares that Adam "at the beginning lived in purity. He controlled his thoughts. But from the time that he transgressed, the command of God, heavy mountains weighed upon his mind, and evil thought mingled with it and became completely a part of the mind, and yet this was not really man's mind by nature…" Nevertheless, although the Fall had devastating effects on humanity, it did not damage the natural image of God in man. The natural image is demonstrated in human free will given as a gracious gift from God. Further, Macarius argues that not only does the human have the ability to recognize that God exists even before grace acts in the soul, he also, through free will, has the capacity to resist and oppose sin even before grace assists him. "For such is humanity's nature, that it may be immersed in the depths of evil

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190 Homily XV, Section 22, 116-117.  
191 Homily XVI, Section 12, 141.  
and be a slave to sin, yet it can still turn to good.\textsuperscript{196} Nevertheless, even though Macarius places such a positive premium on the free will of humanity, there is a limit to the potential of that will, in that free will is not able to achieve perfection on its own. Without grace working in the soul, there is no value to the efforts, no pleasing of God and no final triumph through perfection.\textsuperscript{197}

Macarius describes perfection as grace that comes "and completely removes the veil so that the soul, now restored to its former and proper purity, created pure and without blame, continually and without blemish, looks with its pure eyes on the glory of the true light and the true "sun of righteousness" (Mt. 4:2), shining…in the heart."\textsuperscript{198} In Macarius' theology, ultimate perfection will not exist until eternity, but harbingers of such a state can be attained on this earth in conjunction with "labor, temptation, and much struggle."\textsuperscript{199} For him, the "principles of light and darkness vie for dominance within the same heart,"\textsuperscript{200} and shall continue so until released by death.\textsuperscript{201} According to Macarius,

\begin{quote}
…whoever wishes to become a partaker of the divine glory and to see, as in a mirror, the form of Christ in the ruling power of his mind, must, with unquenchable love and inexhaustible desire, with all his heart and strength, by night and day, seek the help of God which powerfully comes from him, in
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{196} \textit{Pseudo-Macarius}, "Homily15," Section 36, 121.
\textsuperscript{197} \textit{Ibid}, Section 3, 136. Macarius writes: "Grace exercises the soul differently in order to restore it to the heavenly Father perfect and faultless and pure." \textit{Pseudo-Macarius}, "Homily 18," Section 9, 145.
\textsuperscript{198} \textit{Ibid}, Section 1, 135-136.
\textsuperscript{199} \textit{Ibid}, Section 4, 136-137.
\textsuperscript{200} \textit{Ibid}, Section 4, 137.
\textsuperscript{201} Macarius is sometimes frustratingly inconsistent with the subject of perfection. Periodically, he speaks of complete perfection as attainable in this life. "Finally, when a person reaches the perfection of the Spirit, completely purified of all passions and united to and interpenetrated by the Paraclete Spirit in an ineffable communion, and is deemed worthy to become spirit in a mutual penetration with the Spirit, then it becomes all light, all eye, all spirit, all joy, all repose, all happiness, all love, all compassion, all goodness and kindness…. They become like to Christ, putting on the virtues of the power of the Spirit with a constancy. They interiorly become faultless and spotless and pure." \textit{Pseudo-Macarius"} "Homily 18," Section 10, 145. Macarius then goes on to elaborate that this person, although in a state of interior perfection, is still capable of demonstrating externally evil fruit, leaving one to assume that in his view, purity and perfection of motive and mind can still devolve into exterior actions of sin—which sounds very much like Wesley's bifurcation when he speaks of known and unknown sin.
which help it is impossible to share unless, as I said before, a person abjures
the pleasure of the world, from the desires of the opposing power, which is
foreign to the light and is an activity of evil, having no likeness to good activity
and is completely alien to it.\textsuperscript{202}

Further, Macarius is fond of the therapeutic language of soteriology, and speaks of Christ the
Savior being the "true Physician, who cures without costs." In the language of Macarius, "no
earthly medicines...had any power to cure the human race of so great an interior plague." This
type of illness can only "be healed by the help of...medicine...a cleansing of his heart by the
Holy Spirit."\textsuperscript{203}

Finally, within the Homilies from the outset there is an important emphasis placed on
experience as criterion for being in contact with God, or living at a level of experience that is
declared to be spiritual. Toward the end of the first Macarian homily, which Wesley included
among the twenty-two homilies he placed in his "Christian Library," Macarius writes: "

If therefore thou art become the throne of God, and the heavenly Charioteer has
seated himself upon thee, and thy soul is become all over a spiritual eye; and
thou art nourished with that food of the Spirit, and have been made to drink of
the living water, and art clothed with the garments of light; lo, then thou livest
indeed, even the life which is truly eternal; thy soul being at rest with the Lord;
lo thou art in actual possession, and have received these things from the Lord in
truth, that thou might live the true life. But if thou art conscious to thyself of
nothing of all this, lament and grieve, and mourn, because as yet thou have not
any share of the spiritual and eternal riches, neither have received the true life.
Be in pain, therefore, and entreat the Lord night and day, because thou art sunk
into the calamitous poverty of sin.\textsuperscript{204}

\textsuperscript{203} Pseudo-Macarius, "Homily 20," Sections 6 and 7, 152. Golitzin suggests that "Perhaps...we find somewhat
more emphasis in his writings on Christ as precisely healer or physician...of the soul than we do in other Greek
writers." Ibid, 132.
\textsuperscript{204} Macarius, The Homilies of Macarius, Homily 1, Sections 13 and 14, as cited by Wesley, "A Christian Library,"
Volume 1, accessed at http://Wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/a-christian-library-volume-1, 5/21/2013; In Wesley's
Library he identifies this part of the Homily as from sections 13 and 14, while in the translation of A. J. Mason in
1921 and in Maloney's work, the sections are identified as only section 12. See especially, Arthur James Mason,
Fifty Spiritual Homilies of St. Macarius the Egyptian, (New York, NY: The MacMillan Company, 1921), Homily
Homily, 44.
Wesley's interaction with Macarius is more pronounced than in some of the earlier Fathers, primarily because of his inclusion of the Macarian markers in his Christian Library. Beyond the Christian Library, direct references to Macarius are scarce. Wesley quotes Macarius in his sermon "The Scripture Way of Salvation," based on Ephesians 2:8, to bolster his contention regarding the "gradual work of sanctification" beginning at the moment of justification and continuing throughout life due to the ongoing return of temptations and the revival of the sin principle within the Christian.205

How exactly did Macarius, fourteen hundred years ago, describe the present experience of the children of God! "The unskilled," or unexperienced, "when grace operates, presently imagine they have no more sin. Whereas they that have discretion cannot deny, that even we who have the grace of God may be molested again.—For we have often had instances of some among the brethren, who have experienced such grace as to affirm that they had no sin in them; and yet, after all, when they thought themselves entirely freed from it, the corruption that lurked within was stirred up anew, and they were well-night burned up."206

As noted earlier, Wesley appeals to some of the Fathers as a group to emphasize the primitiveness of his point of practice or theology. In describing Methodism to his critics, Wesley is content to say, "This old religion…is no other than love, the love of God and of all mankind; the loving God with all our heart, and soul, and strength, as having first loved us…. This love is the great medicine of life…"207 He then adds, without reference or quotation, "This is the religion of the primitive Church…. It is clearly expressed…in the works of Chrysostom,
Basil, Ephrem Syrus and Macarius. Wesley is convinced that "a cloud of witnesses" could easily be produced by him to support his conclusion, but differs because in his mind his point cannot be contested by anyone who has even a partial acquaintance with Christian antiquity.

Despite these modest references, one can suggest that Macarius had an impact on Wesley's thinking, particularly in the areas of pneumatology and perfection. According to English, Macarius "reinforced three ideas which Wesley already knew, namely, (i) the Christian is dependent upon the Holy Spirit at all times; (ii) persons of faith engage in constant prayer; and (iii) perfection in this life is possible." English is conscious of overstating idea (iii) and notes that Macarius was not consistent in this area and in fact, at times denied that perfection was possible in this life. I would argue that indeed this latter view is more dominant in Macarius, yet the vacillation is not unlike Wesley himself in his teaching on perfection.


"Well within the patristic period itself Ephraem's reputation as a holy man, poet, and theologian of note was widely proclaimed, well beyond his native Syria and the territories where Syriac was spoken." His entire life was spent "a bishop's man, possibly a deacon,

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208 Ibid, 424. Wesley, in an attempt to reconcile with Whitefield addressed the Calvinistic Controversy in a brief piece written early in his public life, in which he discussed unconditional election, irresistible grace and final perseverance. In the notes of this edition of Wesley's *Works* there is a small addendum stating, "Mr. Moore says, "Mr. Wesley told me, that, at the time he wrote this, he believed, with Macarius, that all who are perfected in love, I John iv., were thus elect. But he afterwards doubted of this." The entire document appears to have been written at an early period of Wesley's public life..." *Works*, Volume XIII, 507-509, note.

209 Ibid.


211 Frances Young offers several reasons why Ephrem should be included in the same landscape as the Greek Fathers. 1) Ephrem rapidly attained fame in the Greek world, 2) Ephrem represents the Christianity of the Antiochene hinterland, the Syrian borders of the Roman Empire and as such, is a salutary reminder of the interlinked diversity of the Empire as it Christianized, 3) Ephrem's work was clearly affected by the spread of Arianism, and his theology in some respects bears comparison with that of the Cappadocians as he tries to meet the challenges." Young, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon*, 174-175.

definitely a teacher…and commentator on the scriptures, an apologist/polemicist and a liturgical poet.”

Ephrem's theology was deeply impacted by the Arian controversy, but it came to have a very different character in many other theologians' writings in that it is was expressed in poetry. In so doing, "Ephrem reminds us that the Syriac tradition was deeply intertwined with the Greek East and would have an important influence on the development of Orthodox hymnography," which in turn was a development in Orthodox theology. Like Wesley, Ephrem "did not write primarily tracts for scholars or meditation pieces for monks, or even literary homilies intended for circulation among the theological trend-setters. His texts were used for the most part by busy churchmen…, who had liturgies to celebrate or catechetical classes to teach." Christensen, in summarizing the theological emphases of Ephrem's writings, especially as they relates to the subject of deification, concludes,

Ephrem...weaves the images of deification together in memorable hymns of ascent. As in the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus, a great "chasm" divides humanity from divinity. However, there is a celestial ladder of descent and ascent to reunite what has been severed and restore humanity to paradise. God comes down so that humanity may be drawn up to God…. The human soul grows in stages into divinity: from physical birth to spiritual birth (baptism), from mother's milk to the meat of the Gospel, by learning to "sing" (praise) and feed on divinity (Eucharist), the purified soul soars and returns in flight to God in the form of the Cross. Other images of deification in Ephrem include: seeing with the "luminous eye," blessing the One that has "polished our mirror," drinking the "medicine of life," "putting on the garments of light," wearing the

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213 Sidney H. Griffith, "Spirit in the Bread; Fire in the Wine": The Eucharist as "Living Medicine" in the Thought of Ephraem the Syrian, Modern Theology, 15:2 April 1999, 226 [225-246].

214 Quasten considers Ephrem the greatest Christian poet of this period. See Johannes Quasten, Patrology, Volume III, 4.

215 Frances M. Young, From Nicaea to Chalcedon, 173.

216 Griffith, "A Spiritual Father," 207. "Ephrem's extensive writings fall into four categories: (1) prose works; these include fine commentaries on Genesis and on the Diatessaron (Gospel Harmony), as well as a number of controversial writings against the followers of Marcion, Bardaisan of Edessa, and Mani; (2) works in artistic prose, notably the Discourse on our Lord and the Letter to Publius which takes the form of a meditation on the Last Judgement; (3) verse homilies (mē mrē̇), the most important of which is a collection of six, on Faith; and (4) hymns (madrā shē̇), of which at least five hundred survive. It is upon the hymns, collected together into separate cycles in the early fifth century, that Ephrem's reputation as a theologian and poet primarily rests." Sebastian Brock, The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life, (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications Inc., 1987), 31.
"robe of glory," and passing through the "flaming sword" of the Cherub guarding the gates to the "Tree of Paradise."  

Ephrem, like many before him, anchored his view of deification in the Incarnation. Whatever else he affirms, this is the foundation upon which his view of theosis is built.

In this day in which the Rich became poor for our sakes, let the rich man make the poor man share with him at his table. On this day to us came forth the Gift, although we asked it not! Let us therefore bestow alms on them that cry and beg of us. This is the day that opened for us a gate on high to our prayers. Let us open also gates to suppliants that have transgressed, and of us have asked [forgiveness.] Today the Lord of nature was against His nature changed; let it not to us be irksome to turn our evil wills. Fixed in nature is the body; great or less it cannot become: but the will has such dominion, it can grow to any measure. Today Godhead sealed itself upon Manhood, that so with the Godhead's stamp Manhood might be adorned.

Out of the adornment of Christ's humanity, Ephrem is clear that "He that was above stooped down to those who were beneath, to distribute His treasures to them," one of which was the potential of human deification. "Glory be to Him Who received from us that He might give to us; that through that which is ours we might more abundantly receive of that which is His!"

This is He Who was begotten from the Godhead according to His nature, and from manhood not after His nature, and from baptism not after His custom; that we might be begotten from manhood according to our nature, and by the Spirit not after our custom.

In Hymn 48, in his "Hymns on Virginity," Ephrem spends time on God's merciful tendency to correct the imbalance in our life that was brought on by our free will that leads us into perversity.

220 Ibid.
221 Ibid, 305.
Our freedom does not cease to pervert. His grace does not cease to make
straight. Freedom made hateful the beauty of Adam that he might be god…. But
grace adorned its flaws, and God came to be human. Divinity flew down to
rescue and lift up humanity. Behold the Son adorned the servant's flaw, so that
he became god as he desired.\(^\text{222}\)

Ephrem continually centers his deification theology in the Incarnation. In one of his "Hymns
on the Nativity," he establishes a brief refrain—"Blessed is the Babe by whom Adam and Eve
grew young again,"—after the first strophe and then expands the refrain to make up the entire
eleventh strophe of the hymn: "Old men cried out, "Blessed is the Babe Who restored Adam's
youth; he was displeased that he grew old and wasted away, yet the serpent who killed him
shed [his skin] and recovered his youth. Blessed is the Babe by whom Eve and Adam were
restored to youth."\(^\text{223}\) For Ephrem, restoration to youth is akin to deification and looks back to
the pristine condition of humanity prior to the Fall, where time and death had not yet entered
the cosmos. Nevertheless, this youth renewal does not happen outside of baptism.

...the Spirit...has flown and come down,--that he may dwell on the many;--and
as each after each comes up,--He loves him and abides on him.... A marvel it
is, O my Lord, now...that...it is the water of baptism,--that alone is able to
atone...The sheep exulted when they saw—the hand draw nigh to baptize
them.—Receive, O ye sheep, your sealing; enter and be mingled in the
flock!...For lo! The Angels rejoice—over one sinner if he repent:--how much
more do they now rejoice—that in all churches and congregations,—lo! Baptism
is bringing forth—the heavenly from the earthly! The baptized when they come
up are sanctified;--the sealed when they go down are pardoned.—They who
come up have put on glory;--they who go down have cast off sin.—Adam put
off his glory in a moment;--ye have been clothed with glory in a moment.\(^\text{224}\)

\(^{222}\) Ephrem the Syrian, "Hymns on Virginity, Hymn 48," (Tr.) Kathleen E. McVey, *Ephrem the Syrian, Hymns*,


\(^{224}\) Ephrem Syrus, "Hymns for the Feast of the Epiphany, Hymn VI, "*NPNF*, Second Series, 13, 273-274. Thomas
Buchan indicates that in Ephrem's anthropology the Garden of Eden or Paradise initially "was designed and
ordered as an environment specifically conducive to humanity's attainment to divine perfection and immortality. It
was God's intent that Adam and Eve should be "deified," that, by means of the proper application of their divinely
bestowed free will, they should actively seek and freely choose the immortal life that was to be conferred by their
eating from the tree of life. This divine intent for humanity's deification is made abundantly clear in Ephrem..."
Thomas Buchan, "Paradise as the Landscape of Salvation in Ephrem the Syrian," (Eds), Michael J. Christensen
Although the Godhead secretly seals the members of His flock from among post-Adamic humanity, it is only through the "chrism of Christ" at baptism that the secrecy is removed; the sealing is made visible and sanctification is begun.\textsuperscript{225}

Deification was effected through chrism, baptism and the Eucharist. The poet wrote extensively on the efficacy of these mysteries. But salvation was no guarantor of spirituality. For this, free will took precedence, as it was possible to forfeit one's place in Paradise as a consequence of post-baptismal sin. The eschatological wedding garment stood in danger of being stained. It was ethical vigilance that maintained eschatological preparedness.\textsuperscript{226}

Ephrem carefully declares that through the Incarnation and the Eucharist, human nature is recreated by the infusion of Christ's body. To ailing human nature Christ came as a physician-healer with three prescriptions: bread, wine and chrism.\textsuperscript{227} Salvation and sanctification of the body and soul is the work of the divine Physician.

In Ephrem's writings one can find multiplied therapeutic language centered on the Incarnation and Atonement provided by Christ. Ephrem speaks of Christ as the "Medicine of life;"\textsuperscript{228} the Physician Who came down and amputated without pain, and healed wounds with a medicine that was not harsh. His Son became a Medicine, that showed sinners mercy.\textsuperscript{229}

Ephrem describes the day of the nativity as a great day beyond all days because "a store of medicines is this Thy great day, because on it shone forth the Medicine of Life to the wounded!"\textsuperscript{230}

Wesley, as noted earlier, speaks almost prosaically in his praise of Ephrem, when he notes in his journal "I read to them one of the exhortations of Ephraim Syrus: the most

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item\textsuperscript{225} Ephrem Syrus, "Hymns for the Feast of the Epiphany, Hymns III, IV and V, \textit{Ibid}, 269-273. Despite the sealing of the truth, of the Holy Spirit, a Christian sheep can choose to become a goat through his free will."
\item\textsuperscript{226} Christopher Buck, "Saneintial," \textit{Theō sis}, 117.
\item\textsuperscript{227} Ephrem the Syrian, "Hymns on Virginity, Hymn 37," \textit{Ibid}, 424-425.
\item\textsuperscript{228} Ephraim Syrus, "Hymns on the Nativity, Hymn I," \textit{NPNF}, Second Series, Volume 13, 225; see also "Hymn II," 228; Hymn III, 231.
\item\textsuperscript{229} Ephraim Syrus, "Hymns on the Nativity, Hymn II," \textit{Ibid}, 229.
\item\textsuperscript{230} Ephraim Syrus, "Hymns on the Nativity, Hymn III," \textit{Ibid}, 230.
\end{enumerate}
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awakening writer, I think, of all the ancients." Wesley makes no attempt to identify the exhortation source, so one is left only to conjecture as to what brought Wesley to such heights of praise for Ephrem. In another journal reference Wesley opines "surely never did any man, since David, give us such a picture of a broken and contrite heart," yet fails again to pinpoint precisely what prompted such an opinion, although he writes that he spent several hours in his reading of Ephraim. Fourteen years later, Wesley recounts an uncited story from the writings of Ephrem to highlight repentance, healing and forgiveness. Finally, Wesley in a sermon preached prior to 1742, indicts the lack of religious scholarship at Oxford when he chastises university men for not being able to "read and understand so much as a page of Clemens Alexandrinus, St. Chrysostom, or Ephraem Syrus," yet at no time suggests from what pages one might read.

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231 Wesley, "Journal, October 12, 1736," Works, Volume 1, 42. Wesley mentions Ephrem again during his Georgia missionary assignment. See Wesley, "MS Journals and Diaries, October 13, 1736," Works (BCE), Volume 18, 431; October 19, 136, Ibid, 433; November 1, 1736, Ibid, 442. Each of the references is not sourced.
Chapter 5

The Use of Scripture to Support the Doctrine of Theosis and Perfection in Selected Greek Fathers and John Wesley

I. Introduction

To this juncture, the chapters in this thesis have attempted to orient the reader to the apparent connection between the doctrine of theosis as demonstrated in selected Eastern Fathers and the doctrine of perfection in John Wesley. To that end, chapter two provided a broad overview of Wesley's proclivity to refer to, or at least lean toward, the works of selected Eastern Fathers. Chapter three, on the other hand, although interested in the same area of doctrine, focused primarily on the works of primary and selected English Divines from the 15\textsuperscript{th} to 17\textsuperscript{th} centuries, in an attempt to determine whether Wesley's penchant toward the Greek Fathers was mitigated through the renaissance of Patristic scholarship within the Anglican Church itself. The conclusion of such an investigation was that Wesley's use of the Anglican Divines was limited and did not suggest crossover influence in terms of the Greek Fathers. Subsequently, chapter four provided a more detailed examination of the pneumatological/theosis doctrine as provided by the selected Eastern Fathers, while at the same time examining and evaluating Wesley's use of these same Fathers and, in particular, usage that could explicate the influence of such Fathers on Wesley's doctrine of perfection.

There remains yet another chapter of research that may assist in demonstrating the influence/connection between Wesley and the Greek Fathers, and that is an examination of primary Scriptural texts in both Wesley and the Greek Fathers that by usage and commentary reveal influence.
John Wesley, among other things, called himself *homo unius libri*, "a man of one book." In his "Preface" to his *Standard Sermons* Wesley explains his self-claimed title.

I have thought, I am a creature of a day, passing through life, as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit come from God, and returning to God: just hovering over the great gulf; till a few moments hence, I am no more seen! I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing, the way to heaven: how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way; for this very end he came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book! Oh give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God! I have it: here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be *homo unius libri*.¹

"What he meant by this self-appellation is that the Bible was always the one book close at hand, an indispensable auxiliary of the Spirit's formative work throughout his life and gospel ministry."² Wesley asserted to take the Bible as his supreme authority. On Monday, June 7, 1766, Wesley expressed, in his typically bold fashion, his affirmation of the Christian Scriptures. "I hand out no false colours, but show you all I am, all I intend, all I do. I am a member of the Church of England... My ground is the Bible. Yea, I am a Bible-bigot. I follow it in all things, both great and small."³ Despite his declaration, Wesley was 'a man of one book' in the sense that he granted supreme regard to the Christian Scriptures and that for him, the Bible was the primary authority, but not the exclusive authority.⁴

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³ Wesley, "Journal 14," *Works (BCE)*, Vol. 22, 42. According to Donald A. Bullen, Wesley both believed and taught "the authority for all Christian doctrine was to be found in the Bible." Wesley, Bullen concludes, "maintained the supreme authority of scripture in every attempt to determine Christian doctrine and to set out Christian practice. Any other influence of authority that he acknowledged was seen as subordinate to the Bible. This set up in his mind a tension out of which emerged his own refined theological position and he sought to prove it from scripture." Donald A. Bullen, *A Man of One Book? John Wesley's Interpretation and Use of the Bible*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2007), 180.
⁴ As has been noted earlier in this work, identifying Wesley's sources can be a daunting task. Samuel Rogal observes, "Without the Scriptures in hand, one cannot readily separate Wesley's language and syntax from those of his sources." Samuel J. Rogal, "Scripture References, Allusions, and Echoes in Works by Charles and John Wesley, *Trinity Journal*, 25:1 (Spring 2004), 76 [75-92]. Wesley, in the "Preface" to his *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* explained his lack of sourcing within his work. "It was a doubt with me for some time, whether
The purpose of this chapter is not to test Wesley's approbation of the Bible, but rather to examine the biblical texts he commented on or drew content from in order to support his view of perfection.\(^5\) In doing so, a parallel task will be to compare Wesley's comments and textual content with those of the Greek Fathers who have been thus far appropriated in this study. It remains this author's contention that "undoubtedly there were passages within the early Church writings that Wesley brought to the text of scripture and these influenced his interpretation of the text."\(^6\)

Even so, such an examination will be of necessity selective, given the voluminous use of Scripture by Wesley in his sermons and other writings. Outler contends that Wesley knew the Scripture "so nearly by heart that even his natural speech is biblical."\(^7\)

...judging by the texts from which he preached, the Gospel according to St. Matthew was his favourite book (1362 recorded usages); this, however, is followed by Hebrews (965), John (870), Luke (853), and 1 Cor. (779). His Old Testament favourite...was Isaiah (668 citations), followed by the Psalms (624) and Jeremiah (208). His favourite New Testament preaching text was Mark 1:15 (190 usages), followed by 2 Cor. 8:9 (167), Eph. 2:8 (133), Gal. 6:14 (129), and Matt. 16:26 (117). His favorite sermon text in the Old Testament was Isa. 55:7 (112 usages); this was followed by Jer. 8:22 (102), Isa. 55:6 (90), Hos. 14:4 (87 times) and Psalm 147:3 (72 times).\(^8\)

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\(^5\) Although Sangster concludes that "a full third of the texts on which Wesley chiefly relies for his doctrine of Christian Perfection are taken from the First Epistle of John," it is not critical to this study as to where Wesley cast his biblical anchor most frequently, but rather, as he did so, were the voices and writings of the Eastern Fathers a part of his interpretation of such Scripture passages. W.E. Sangster, \textit{The Path to Perfection, An Examination & Restatement of John Wesley's Doctrine of Christian Perfection}, (London, UK: Epworth Press, 1984), 48.

\(^6\) Bullen, Ibid, 132.

\(^7\) Albert Outler, "Introduction, Wesley and His Sources," \textit{The Works of John Wesley, (BCE)}, Volume 1, 69.

\(^8\) Ibid.
II. An Examination of Selected Scriptural Texts.

In order to restrict the scope of this section, the selected Scripture texts will be drawn primarily from Wesley's "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection." There is consensus Wesley published this work in 1766 and subsequently revised the original, concluding the last of such in 1777. According to Olson, "The Plain Account" is the closest thing we have from his pen that resembles a comprehensive presentation of his doctrine of Christian perfection. In the opening paragraph of this work, Wesley is clear about his purpose in writing.

What I purpose in the following papers is, to give a plain and distinct account of the steps by which I was led, during a course of many years, to embrace the doctrine of Christian perfection. This I owe to the serious part of mankind, those who desire to know all "the truth as it is in Jesus." And these only are concerned in questions of this kind. To these I would nakedly declare the thing as it is, endeavouring all along to show, from one period to another, both what I thought, and why I thought so.

A. Matthew 5:48

"Therefore ye shall be perfect, as your Father who is in heaven is perfect." In his first reference to this verse in "A Plain Account" Wesley places it alongside 2 Corinthians 7:1 and Ephesians 4:23. In doing so he quotes directly from his 1733 sermon

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9 Wesley, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, as believed and taught by the Reverend Mr. John Wesley, from the year 1725, to the year 1777," Works, Volume XI, 366-446. The verses selected from this work will be focused on those which Wesley referenced most frequently. Explanations regarding the selected verses will come first from "A Plain Account" and move then to other sources of commentary and explanation within the corpus of Wesley's works.

10 Mark K. Olson, John Wesley's 'A Plain Account of Christian Perfection,' (Fenwick, MI: Alethea In Heart, 2005), 2.

11 Wesley, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection," Ibid, 366. In the concluding sections of this work, Wesley writes, "I have now done what I proposed. I have given a plain and simple account of the manner wherein I first received the doctrine of perfection, and the sense wherein I received, and wherein I do receive, and teach it to this day. I have declared the whole and every part of what I mean by that scriptural expression. I have drawn the picture of it at full length, without either disguise or covering." Ibid, 433. Wesley uses a wide nomenclature when referring to his theology of perfection. In "A Plain Account" there are at least 140 usages of "perfection" terminology.

12 Unless otherwise noted, Scripture verses cited in this chapter are from "The New Testament by John Wesley, 1755." Wesley often, in presenting his argument, strings together different verses of Scripture which he considers to be making the same point. I shall consider generally the primary verse within such a string.
"The Circumcision of the Heart" in an attempt to demonstrate his long-standing consistency of theology as it relates to the doctrine of perfection. In the most direct context of this scriptural quotation, Wesley reminds his readers that the term holiness is a synonym for perfection and describes a constant or "habitual disposition of the soul," which includes cleansing from sin and clothing with Christ-like virtues, the most compelling being love.\(^{14}\)

Wesley refers to the same text a second time while defending his point of view that perfection can be obtained in this lifetime, prior to death.\(^{15}\) Although his argument is somewhat fragmented, he again includes Matthew 5:48 within the flow of several other verses which he sees as bolstering his point of reference.\(^{16}\) Here for the first time in "A Plain Account" Wesley augments his language of perfection by referring to the doctrine as entire sanctification. In the context of this language, Wesley again affirms the essence of perfection to be cleansing from sin and the complete approbation of the love of God and Christ in a person's life.

In his third and final reference to this text in "A Plain Account," Wesley winds down his impassioned defense of the doctrine of perfection, which he insists is the doctrine of St. Paul, St. James, St. Peter, St. John and in fact, it is the doctrine "found…in the oracles of God, in the Old and New Testament' when I read them with no other view or desire but to save my own soul."\(^{17}\) He then offers a concise explanation of perfection, in which he essentially distills his view of perfection to purity of intention, the imitation of Christ, and love to God and neighbor.

\(^{13}\) Wesley, "A Plain Account," Ibid. 6, 203.
\(^{14}\) Ibid.
\(^{15}\) Ibid, 17, 388-391.
\(^{17}\) Ibid, 27, 444.
In one view, it is purity of intention, dedicating all the life to God. It is the giving God all our heart; it is one desire and design ruling all our tempers. It is the devoting, not a part, but all our soul, body, and substance to God. In another view, it is all the mind which was in Christ, enabling us to walk as Christ walked. It is the circumcision of the heart from all filthiness, all inward as well as outward pollution. It is a renewal of the heart in the whole image of God, the full likeness of Him that created it. In yet another, it is the loving God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves. Now, take it in which of these views you please, (for there is no material differences,) and this is the whole and sole perfection, as a train of writings prove to a demonstration, which I have believed and taught for these forty years, from the year 1725 to the year 1765.  

Early in his preaching ministry Wesley referenced Matthew 5:48 as part of his treatment of the doctrine of justification by faith. Characteristically, although Wesley concludes that his view of justification is consistent with Calvin's view, he also tends to link justification and sanctification so closely together that at times the dividing line is blurred. In his sermon "Justification by Faith," which was first published in written form in 1746, as Wesley addresses the foundation for the doctrine of justification, he includes the pneumatological text of Matthew 5:48.

I am first to show what is the general ground of this whole doctrine of justification. In the image of God was man made; holy as he that created him is holy, merciful as the author of all is merciful, perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect...  

Wesley continues in this sermon to sharpen his definition of justification. When he asserts that justification does not suggest a Christian person being made actually just and righteous, because such declarations belong to sanctification, nevertheless, when he declares "the one implies what God does for us through his Son, the other what he works in us by his Spirit,"

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18 Ibid.
19 Wesley, "Justification by Faith," Sermon 5, Works (BCE), I, 184. Outler suggests that "This written sermon...stands as the earliest full summary of Wesley's soteriology in the basic form in which it will continue. In this sense, it is a landmark sermon to which all subsequent ones may be compared." (Outler, "An Introductory Comment," Sermon 5, Ibid, 182.
20 Ibid, 187.
21 Ibid.
his dividing line between justification and sanctification seem to demonstrate a measure of overlap.

Always close to Wesley's heart, even in his discussion of justification, is the directional compass of the Christian's life that moves them toward perfection. Wesley maintains that one of the outcomes of justification/sanctification is the believer's return to a pre-Adamic state.

Implicit in this sermon's description of humanity prior to the Fall is Wesley's vision of redeemed humanity as a result of justification and sanctification. In describing such a state, Wesley is clear.

To man thus upright and perfect God gave a perfect law, to which he required full and perfect obedience. He required full obedience in every point,...from the moment man became a living soul till the time of his trial should be ended. No allowance was made for any falling short.\textsuperscript{22}

Wesley, in his sermon "The Righteousness of Faith," builds an impressive contrast between the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of faith. However, in doing so he employs on occasion the same perfective language and scripture, including Matthew 5:48, of the Christian life to describe the prescribed life of the individual living under the law.

This law or covenant (usually called the covenant of works) given by God to man in paradise, required an obedience perfect in all its parts, entire and wanting nothing,...It required that man should fulfill all righteousness, inward and outward,...that he should be pure in heart, even as God is pure, perfect as his Father in heaven was perfect; that he should love the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength; that he should love every soul which God had made even as God had loved him; that by this universal benevolence he should 'dwell in God (who is love) and God in him'; that he should serve the Lord his God with all his strength, and in all things singly aim at his glory. These are the things which the righteousness of the law required, that he who did them might live thereby.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid, 184.
\textsuperscript{23} Wesley, "The Righteousness of Faith," \textit{Works} (BCE), 204-5.
Wesley's contrast is intended to declare the absolute hopelessness of the covenant of works versus the hope and grace of the righteousness of faith, however at times it is difficult to discern the difference between the two.

As early as 1733, Wesley identified his doctrine of perfection with the Pauline phrase "the circumcision of the heart." In doing so, he again maintains a determinative testamental contrast, concluding "That 'circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter.'…It is not either outward circumcision or baptism, or any other outward form, but a right state of soul—a mind and spirit renewed after the image of him that created it."24 In his continuing discourse, Wesley once again includes familiar scriptural images, including Matthew 5:48.

I am first to inquire wherein that circumcision of the heart consists which will receive the praise of God. In general we may observe it is that habitual disposition of soul which in the Sacred Writings is termed 'holiness', and which directly implies the being cleansed from sin, 'from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit', and by consequence the being endued with those virtues which were also in Christ Jesus, the being so 'renewed in the image of our mind' as to be 'perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect'. To be more particular, circumcision of heart implies humility, faith, hope, and charity.25

Wesley goes on to explain that holiness cannot be conjured by one's self, but requires the presence and power of the Spirit of God. For Wesley it is impossible "for us even to think a good thought without the supernatural assistance of his Spirit…to renew our whole souls in righteousness and true holiness."26

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26 Wesley, Ibid, 403-4. In the same section, Wesley invokes therapeutic language in his description of saving faith and the circumcision of the heart. "And this knowledge of their disease, whereby they are more and more cleansed from one part of it, pride and vanity, disposes them to embrace with a willing mind the second thing implied in 'circumcision of heart'—that faith which alone is able to make them whole, which is the one medicine given under heaven to heal their sickness." Ibid, 404.
In his 1748 sermon, "The Marks of the New Birth," Wesley returns to his favorite themes attached to the doctrine of perfection—love of God and humanity, along with continual obedience to the commands of God.

Thus I have plainly laid down those marks of the new birth which I find laid down in Scripture. Thus doth God himself answer that weighty question what it is to be born of God... This it is, in the judgment of the Spirit of God, to be a son or a child of God. It is so to believe in God through Christ as 'not to commit sin', and to enjoy, at all times and in all places that 'peace of God which passeth all understanding'... It is so to love God, who hath thus loved you, as you never did love any creature: so that ye are constrained to love all men as yourselves; with a love not only ever burning in your hearts, but flaming out in all your actions and conversations, and making your whole life one 'labour of love', one continued obedience to those commands, 'Be ye merciful, as God is merciful; 'Be ye holy, as I the Lord am holy;' 'Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.'

During the years 1739 to 1746 Wesley preached repeatedly on the Sermon on the Mount. His intent for these discourses was to explain and illustrate the life of the Christian understood as the result or fruit of justifying faith. Wesley's exposition of the text is exacting both in its exegesis and in its application. He continually sharpens the behavioural axe for the Christian, leaving virtually no area untouched. Near the conclusion of Sermon 23, Wesley invokes kindness and love toward, as he calls them, "your bitterest persecutors," and intones Matthew 5:48 as one of the bases for such a demand.

In concluding this same sermon, Wesley ends the sermon with a direct reference to Matthew 5:48.

Behold Christianity in its native form, as delivered by its great author! This is the genuine religion of Jesus Christ. Such he presents it to him who eyes are opened.... How desirable is the happiness here described! How venerable, how lovely the holiness! This is the spirit of religion; the quintessence of it. These are indeed the fundamentals of Christianity.... Let us not rest until every line

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thereof is transcribed into our own hearts…. Till we are 'holy as he which hath called us is holy', 'perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect!' \(^{29}\)

B. Matthew 5:8

"Happy are the pure in heart; for they shall see God."

In his first reference to this verse in "A Plain Account," Wesley inserts the scriptural text into the midst of a discourse on loving God and neighbor and as part of the larger context of unfolding his "sentiments of Christian perfection."\(^ {30}\)

"For he is 'pure in heart.' Love has purified his heart from envy, malice, wrath, and every unkind temper. It has cleansed him from pride, whereof 'only cometh contention;' and he hath now 'put on the bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering.' And indeed all possible ground for contention, on his part, is cut off. For none can take from him what he desires, seeing he 'loves not the world, nor any of the things of the world;' but 'all his desire is unto God, and to the remembrance of his name.'\(^ {31}\)

Wesley very consistently reminds his readers of the contrast between the negative tempers of their pre-Christian life and the virtues of their new faith. Nevertheless, he is careful to remind them that even new Christians, who "in their trouble…cry unto the Lord, and he shows them that he hath taken away their sins, and opens the kingdom of heaven in their hearts, 'righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,'"\(^ {32}\) still will struggle with old enemies, as Wesley puts it, of negative tempers. Into that struggle, which often entails doubt and fear regarding their salvation, Wesley then offers the spiritual antidote of a return and full infusion of the Holy Spirit and in so doing, uses Matthew 5:8 as part of his declaration.

…now…do they see the ground of their heart; which God before would not disclose unto them, lest the soul should fail before him, and the spirit which he had made. Now they see all the hidden abominations there, the depths of pride, self-will, and hell; yet having the witness in themselves, 'Thou art an heir of God, a joint heir with Christ, even in the midst of this fiery trial;' which

\(^{29}\) Ibid.


\(^{31}\) Wesley, Ibid, 373.

\(^{32}\) Wesley, Ibid, 380-1.
continually heightens… the inexpressible hunger they feel after a full renewal in his image, in 'righteousness and true holiness.' Then God is mindful of the desire of them that fear him, and gives them a single eye, and a pure heart; He stamps upon them his own image and superscription…  

Wesley's only other use of Matthew 5:8 in "A Plain Account" comes in the first stanza of the third hymn he records in his "Plain Account." As such, the stanza celebrates the multiple blessings that perfection brings to an individual, including spiritual health and wholeness, freedom, renewal in God's likeness, spiritual rest and love, and holiness here and now. In Wesley's hymn, he reverses the text of Matthew 5:8 by writing "His heart is pure who sees thy face." In Wesley's logic if a person sees God's face, then their heart must already be pure.

Not surprisingly, Wesley also references Matthew 5:8 in his remarks on the Sermon on the Mount. As he defines the narrow way that leads to life or universal holiness, he includes in that description the characteristic of purity of heart. In so doing he again links this heart purity to the renewal of God's likeness in humanity along with a deepening and all-encompassing love for God and others.

For 'narrow is the way that leadeth unto life'—the way of universal holiness….the way of purity of heart…Where are they whom…(t)horoughly athirst for God, and continually pant after a renewal in his likeness? How thinly are they scattered over the earth, whose souls are enlarged in love to all mankind; and who love God with all their strength.

Wesley's most detailed explanation of "purity of heart" occurs in his third sermon on the Sermon on the Mount. In the first half of this sermon Wesley once again links the purity of

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33 Wesley, Ibid, 381. Wesley goes on immediately after these remarks to add: "Here I cannot but remark, (1.) That this is the strongest account we ever gave of Christian perfection; indeed too strong in more than one particular, as is observed in the notes annexed. (2.) That there is nothing which we have since advanced upon the subject, either in verse or prose, which is not either directly or indirectly contained in this preface. So that whether our present doctrine be right or wrong, it is however the same which we taught from the beginning" (pp. 381-2).


heart to a full love for God and out of this fountain, a complete love for humanity.

Characteristically, he also is careful to distance vice and impurity from the life of one who lives in the purity of heart.

How excellent things are spoken of the love of our neighbor... Without this all we have, all we do, all we suffer is of no value in the sight of God. But it is that love of our neighbor which springs from the love of God; otherwise itself is nothing worth. It behooves us therefore to examine well upon what foundation our love of our neighbor stands: whether it is really built upon the love God; whether 'we' do 'love him because he first loved us;' whether we are 'pure in heart'. For this is the foundation which shall never be moved: 'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.'

'The pure in heart' are they whose hearts God hath 'purified even as he is pure'; who are purified through faith in the blood of Jesus from every unholy affection; who, being 'cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfect holiness' in the loving 'fear of God'. They are...purified from pride...from anger, from every unkind and turbulent passion, by meekness and gentleness; from every desire but to please and enjoy God, to know and love him more and more, by that hunger and thirst after righteousness which now engrosses their whole soul: so that now they love the Lord their God with all their heart, and with all their soul, and mind, and strength. 36

Wesley later adds in this sermon that those who imbibe purity of heart allow God to "bless them with the clearest communications of his Spirit" and to "see all things full of God." 37

Further, he insists the "purity of heart" is part of "the genuine religion of Jesus Christ" and reflects, in part, participation in perfection and holiness. 38 More than that, Wesley notes that in the practice of purity of heart, these same individuals "live without sin." 39

C. Matthew 6:22 40

"The eye is the light of the body: if therefore thine eye be single, the whole body shall be full of light."

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36 Wesley, "Sermon 23, Upon the Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Discourse the Third," Works (BCE), Volume 1, 510-11.
37 Ibid, 513.
38 Ibid, 517, 530.
39 Ibid, 522.
40 In chapter three of this work, I discussed this verse in some measure in terms of Wesley and Jeremy Taylor's use of it.
Returning to Wesley's "Plain Account," one of his favorite citations is from Matthew 6:22. He uses this scripture to describe the all-encompassing nature of perfection in the Christian. There are no dark corners in the life of a Christian whose eye is single, in that the enlightened one is consumed with a desire for obedience to Christ and continually and constantly endeavors to see his life through this single lens.

His one intention at all times and in all places is, not to please himself, but Him who his soul loveth. He hath a single eye; and because his 'eye is single, his whole body is full of light. The whole is light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth enlighten the house.' God reigns alone; all that is in the soul is 'holiness to the Lord.' There is not a motion in his heart but is according to his will. Every thought that arises points to him, and is in 'obedience to the law of Christ.'

In subsequent paragraphs, Wesley connects a single eye with the glory of God, which to him, is akin to perfection. To be perfect in Christ means complete devotion to bringing glory to God in all areas of life. For Wesley, this is not simply the aim of perfection, it is the actual attainment.

By consequence, 'whatsoever he doeth, it is all to the glory of God.' In all his employments of every kind, he not only aims at this, which is implied in having a single eye, but actually attains it; his business and his refreshments, as well as his prayers, all serve to this great end. Whether he 'sit in the house, or walk by the way,' whether he lie down, or rise up, he is promoting, in all he speaks or does, the one business of his life. Whether he put on his apparel, or labour, or eat and drink, or divert himself from too wasting labour, it all tends to advance the glory of God...These are the very words wherein I largely declared, for the first time, my sentiments of Christian perfection.

In the second transition point in "The Plain Account," which begins in chapter nineteen and encompasses the years 1759-1764, Wesley's views on perfection evolved into their mature form. These chapters (19 to 26) originally were included in the tract "Thoughts on Christian Perfection."

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42 Wesley, Ibid, 373. See footnote 32, where this same scripture text is included in the body of the quotation. Wesley was fond of using, as it were, run-on or multiple Scripture to underline his one main point. Multiple Scripture texts and multiple images was Wesley's way of making his point, thus in footnote 32, he refers to true holiness and perfection as that which includes a full renewal in the image of God, an attitude of fear or reverence towards God, a single eye and pure heart and a new creation.
Perfection," but were afterward included in the "Plain Account." The content of this section is made up of a series of questions and answers that Wesley posed for the 1759 Conference of Methodists. He considered this tract to be a clear and consistent account of his doctrine of perfection. In answering the question of whether a person with a pure heart can prefer pleasing food to unpleasing food or use any pleasure of sense which is not strictly necessary, Wesley suggested that "such a one may use pleasing food…(and) prefer it to unpleasing…food, as a means of increasing thankfulness with a single eye to God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy." In other words, the single eye of God allows the individual Christian to so focus his action or his usage of pleasure so that it only affords praise and thanksgiving toward God.

D. Matthew 22:37

"Jesus said to him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."

Wesley referenced this text or its parallel in Mark 12:30 some seventeen times in "A Plain Account." Clearly, to Wesley, the message of this verse served as a sort of litmus test for his doctrine of perfection. Wesley, as early as 1726 through 1729, acknowledged the impossibility of being what he called "half a Christian." Wholehearted devotion to God, which included singleness of intention, purity of affection, and control of our tempers, was the only pathway to the mount of God.

In the year 1726,… The nature and extent of inward religion, the religion of the heart, now appeared to me in a stronger light than ever it had done before. I saw that giving even all my life to God…would profit me nothing, unless I gave my heart, yea, all my heart to him…. A year or two after…convinced me, more

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44 Wesley, later in his "Plain Account," while providing advice to those who are seemingly hindered in their pursuit of holiness, appears to offer conflicting counsel in the area of pleasure and pleasing food. "Keep yourself pure; let your 'eye' remain 'single, and your whole body shall be full of light.' Admit no desire of pleasing food, or any other pleasure of sense; no desire of pleasing the eye or the imagination, by something grand, or new, or beautiful…. You may bring these desires back; but you need not; you need feel them no more." (Wesley, "A Plain Account," Works, Volume XI, 427, 432).
than ever, of the absolute impossibility of being half a Christian; and I determined, through his grace, ... to be all-devoted to God, to give him all my soul, my body, and my substance.\(^45\)

While mentioning his tract "The Character of a Methodist," Wesley again appeals to Matthew 22:37 by asserting that "A Methodist is one who loves the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength."\(^46\) He moves from this assertion to describe in detail the further traits of a Methodist, until he arrives at the previously mentioned text of Matthew 5:8 and in so doing links the whole-hearted devotion to God to his verbose description of holiness and perfection.

In highlighting some of the content of the Second Methodist Conference of August, 1745, Wesley notes that the subject of sanctification assumed a priority of position and discussion. Wesley's answers to questions about the subject drew a distinction between initial inward sanctification, where the seed of sin remains in the Christian and the time when until that one is sanctified throughout. This complete sanctification, according to Wesley, is generally given to believers when they are very near to death. However, he is quick to add that although the Pauline writings of the New Testament do not speak to the subject, he believes that such thorough sanctification may occur sooner than death for those who expect it and look for it.\(^47\)

In highlighting some of the content of the Fourth Methodist Conference of June 1747, Wesley notes that because of the presence of some at this conference who did not believe in the

\(^46\) Wesley, Ibid, 371.
\(^47\) Wesley, Ibid, 387.
doctrine of perfection, "we agreed to examine it from the foundation." As a result, questions were asked and answered.

In order to this, it was asked, "How much is allowed by our brethren who differ from us with regard to entire sanctification?

They grant, (1.) That every one must be entirely sanctified in the article of death. (2.) That till then a believer daily grows in grace, comes nearer and nearer to perfection. (3.) That we ought to be continually pressing after it, and to exhort all other so to do.

What do we allow them?

We grant, (1.) That many of those who have died in the faith, yea, the greater part of those we have known, were not perfected in love till a little before their death. (2.) That the term sanctified is continually applied by St. Paul to all that were justified. (3.) That by this term alone, he rarely, if ever, means 'saved from all sin.' (4.) That, consequently, it is not proper to use it in that sense, without adding the word wholly, entirely, or the like. (5.) That the inspired writers almost continually speak of or to those who were justified, but very rarely of or to those who were wholly sanctified. (6.) That, consequently, it behooves us to speak almost continually of the state of justification; but more rarely, 'at least in full and explicit terms, concerning entire sanctification.'

Using this exhortation as his launching pad, Wesley goes on to address what he considers to be the specific New Testament grounds for entire sanctification. It is in this discourse, when asked if the New Testament provided any direct command for expecting to be saved from all sin?," that he cites Matthew 22:37 along with Matthew 5:48 as the primary foundational texts for such a doctrine. In 1759, Wesley once again cites a Methodist Conference that dealt primarily

48 Wesley, Ibid, 388.
49 Wesley, Ibid, 388. It is interesting to note that further on in "A Plain Account" Wesley appears to slightly amend these allowances. In references to the second edition of his and his brothers' hymns, published in 1752, Wesley underlines with emphasis that "beyond all possibility of exception, that to this day both my brother and I maintained, (1.) That Christian perfection is that love of God and our neighbor, which implies deliverance from all sin. (2.) That this is received merely by faith. (3.) That it is given instantaneously, in one moment. (4.) That we are to expect it, not at death, but every moment; that now is the accepted time, now is the day of this salvation." (Ibid, 393) Wesley appears to amplify his perfection rhetoric here by emphasizing the potential or expectation of the experience of entire sanctification prior to death.
50 Wesley, Ibid, 390. Wesley immediately addresses the next question, "How does it appear that this is to be done before the article of death?" by concluding, "From the very nature of a command, which is not given to the dead,
with the doctrine of perfection. During the course of the conference the question was raised, "How shall we avoid setting perfection too high or too low?" Wesley's response provided another summary of perfection and a reference to Matthew 22:37-39.

By keeping to the Bible, and setting it just as high as the Scripture does. It is nothing higher and nothing lower than this,—the pure love of God and man; the loving God with all our heart and soul, and our neighbor as ourselves. It is love governing the heart and life, running through all our tempers, words, and actions.

Wesley closes his "Plain Account" with a strident appeal to critics both within the Methodist revival and those without. He expresses frustration and even outrage that those who are closest to the flame, as it were, seem to be inordinately stubborn about embracing the doctrine of perfection. In framing his umbrage, Wesley turns to repetition in definition and scripture citation, including Matthew 22:37-38.

But whatsoever this doctrine is, I pray you, what harm is there in it? Look at it again; survey it on every side, and that with the closest attention. In one view, it is purity of intention, dedicating all the life to God. It is the giving God all our heart; it is one desire and design ruling all our tempers. It is the devoting, not a part, but all our soul, body, and substance to God. In another view, it is all the mind which was in Christ, enabling us to walk as Christ walked. It is the circumcision of the heart from all filthiness, all inward as well as outward pollution. It is a renewal of the heart in the whole image of God, the full likeness of Him that created it. In yet another, it is the loving God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves. Now, take it in which of these views you please, (for there is no material difference,) and this is the whole and sole perfection, as a train of writings prove to a demonstration, which I have believed and taught for these forty years, from the year 1725 to the year 1765. Now let this perfection appear in its native form, and who can speak one word

But to the living. Therefore, 'Thou shalt love God with all thy heart,' cannot mean, Thou shalt do this when thou diest; but, while thou livest." Ibid.

51 Ibid, 397. "Wesley often complained against both the Romanists and Calvinists that they 'set Christian perfection too high,' i.e. 'in the state of glory only.' From their side, the Calvinists retorted that he set it 'too low'—and then added a battery of further charges: that he was inconsistent in his claims and concessions in respect of 'perfection;' that he encouraged his people to self-delusions and self-righteousness, etc. These recriminations and confusions were heightened by the rather sudden increase of 'professors' of 'perfect love' in the Methodist societies during the closing years of the sixth decade of the century," (Albert Outler, ed. Wesley, (London, UK: Oxford University Press, 1964), 283, original emphasis).

against it? Will any dare to speak against loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves? Against a renewal of heart, not only in part, but in the whole image of God?  

E. Mark 12:30

Wesley does not limit himself to Matthew's version of this text. He borrows also from Mark's version in Mark 12:30. His first use of this verse clearly identifies it as a central text for his understanding of the doctrine of perfection. In Wesley's view, "In this is perfection, and glory, and happiness: The royal law of heaven and earth is this, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.' The one perfect good shall be your one ultimate end."

This usage is appended to his introductory summary of the doctrine of holiness as articulated in his early sermon "The Circumcision of the Heart." It also follows a staccato-like string of scriptural phrases that, in Wesley's point of view, all make the same point, that being that the doctrine of perfection is the dominant theme of God's plan of redemption.

Wesley's next use of Mark 12:30 occurs in a lengthy section where he offers one of his fullest descriptions of the doctrine of perfection.

But whom then do you mean by 'one that is perfect?' We mean one in whom is 'the mind which was in Christ,' and who so 'walketh as Christ also walked;' a man 'that hath clean hands and pure heart,' or that is 'cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit;' one in whom is 'no occasion of stumbling,' and who, accordingly, 'does not commit sin.' To declare this a little more particularly: We understand by that scriptural expression, 'a perfect man,' is one in whom God hath fulfilled his faithful word, 'From all filthiness and from all your idols I will cleanse you: I will also save you from all your uncleannesses.' We understand hereby, one whom God hath 'sanctified throughout in body, soul, and spirit;' one who 'walketh in the light as He is in the light, in whom is no darkness at all; the blood of Jesus Christ his Son having cleansed him from all sin.' This man

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53 Wesley, Ibid, 444.
54 Wesley, "A Plain Account," Works, Volume XI, 368.
55 Wesley's second use of Mark 12:30, although again used as part of his perfection nomenclature, is in itself, a benign usage and offers nothing new to his argument. See Ibid, 371.
can now testify to all mankind, 'I am crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' He is 'holy as God who called' him 'holy,' both in heart and 'in all manner of conversation.' He 'loveth the Lord his God with all his heart,' and serveth him 'with all his strength.' He 'loveth his neighbor,' every man, 'as himself;' yea, 'as Christ loveth us;'...Indeed his soul is all love…. This it is to be a perfect man, to be 'sanctified throughout,'\(^56\)

In referring to the Methodist Conference of 1759, Wesley is asked the question, "What is Christian perfection?" He answered using Mark 12:30 and then succinctly defines perfection.

"The loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. This implies that no wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul; and that all the thoughts, words, and actions, are governed by pure love."\(^57\)

Wesley's body of sermons are replete with references to this text. Over twenty-five times Wesley invokes the authority of Christ from this verse.\(^58\) In his sermon, "The Almost Christian," Wesley turns first to Mark 12:30 to provide his answer.

I answer: First, the love of God. For thus saith his Word: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all they soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.' Such a love of God is this as engrosses the whole heart, as takes up all affections, as fills the entire capacity of the soul, and employs the utmost extent of all its faculties.\(^59\)

Wesley exhorts the sleeping soul to awaken to the reality of Christianity. He asks each listener to consider the state of his or her soul. He leaves them little time to ponder the question before he thrusts his sword deeply. "Was God, while I am yet speaking, to require it of thee, art


\(^{57}\) Ibid, 394. The text appears in "A Plain Account," two more times, but in both instances add nothing to the conversation. See Ibid, 416, 429-30.

\(^{58}\) Only the citations that appear to add to Wesley's doctrine of perfection will be included in this work. In an early and unpublished sermon, Wesley actually uses Mark 12:30 as his preaching text. However, the sermon itself allows only a passing interest in love for neighbor. The focus of the sermon is reflected in the title, "The Love of God." This is a rare, if not only occasion where Wesley will separate the love of God from the love of others. See Wesley, "Sermon 144, The Love of God," Works, (BCE), Volume 4, 331-345.

\(^{59}\) Wesley, "The Almost Christian," Works (BCE), Volume 1, 137.
 thou ready to meet death and judgment?”

Wesley finds the answer in part in Mark 12:30.

Hast thou oil in thy lamp? Grace in thy heart? Dost thou 'love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength'? Is 'that mind in thee which was also in Christ Jesus'? Art thou a Christian indeed? That is, a new creature? Are 'old things passed away, and all things become new'? In Wesley's mind the only viable and true religion is summed up by St. Paul "in three particulars—'righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.'" Under the banner of righteousness, Wesley borrows again from Mark 12:30.

And first, righteousness. We cannot be at a loss concerning this if we remember the words of our Lord describing the two grand branches thereof, on which 'hang all the law and the prophets': 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment, the first and great branch of Christian righteousness.

Wesley clearly identifies righteousness in this sermon as the practice of right behavior, as opposed to a judicial or forensic standing before God. With this usage, Wesley is able to attach righteousness to sanctification at least in some measure. At the same time, it is sometimes difficult to discern Wesley's true representation of sanctification, as he vacillates from a progressive and growing holiness to an instantaneous one. This seeming inconsistency is noted in Wesley's next reference to Mark 12:30. As Wesley identifies with his listener who still struggles with sin, he exhorts that one is not to worry "thyselv because of ungodliness, though it still remain in that heart. Repine not because thou still comest short of the glorious image of God; nor yet because pride, self-will, or unbelief cleave to all thy words and works. And be not afraid to know all the evil in thy heart."

In the next section of thought, Wesley, having

61 Ibid, 149.
63 Wesley, Ibid, 221.
provided comfort to the struggling Christian, then elevates the standard of behavior expected of that one in language that seems to dismiss the struggle as the Christian applies himself more strenuously to his faith.

God is merciful to thee a sinner!... Thou art his child. Therefore he will withhold from thee no manner of thing that is good. Is it good that the whole body of sin which is now crucified in thee should be destroyed? It shall be done. Thou shalt be 'cleansed from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit.' Is it good that nothing should remain in thy heart but the pure love of God alone? Be of good cheer! 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind and soul and strength.' 'Faithful is he that hath promised, who also will do it.' It is thy part patiently to continue in the work of faith, and in the labour of love;...  

In his sermon "The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption," Wesley is concerned with describing the contrast between the spiritually aware but unconverted person and the one who has heard the gospel and embraced it by faith. In his description, Wesley again cites Mark 12:30 as the standard the Christian is to attain, at least in some measure, in this present life.

Beware, then, thou who are called by the name of Christ, that thou come not short of the mark of thy high calling. Beware thou rest not... God hath prepared better things for thee, if thou follow on till thou attain. Thou art not called to fear and tremble, like devils, but to rejoice and love, like the angels of God. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.'  

Wesley again betrays some of his ongoing inconsistency in his sermon "The Repentance of Believers." In this case however, he places his emphasis on the continual need of the Christian to practice repentance in the face of one's inability to rise to complete wholeness or holiness.

65 Ibid, 246.
66 Wesley, "The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption," Works (BCE), Volume 1, 266.
67 Wesley contends that upon justification, the Christian is delivered from the dominion of outward sin, and at the same time has the power of inward sin so broken in his or her life that that one no longer needs to follow or be led by such sin. He is quick to caution however that "it is by no means true that inward sin is then totally destroyed, that the root of pride, self-will, anger, love of the world, is then taken out of the heart, or that the carnal mind and the heart bent to backsliding are entirely extirpated. And to suppose the contrary is not, as some may think, an innocent, harmless mistake. No: it does immense harm; it entirely blocks up the way to any farther change.... If therefore we think we are quite made whole already, there is no room to seek any farther healing. On this supposition it is absurd to expect a farther deliverance from sin, whether gradual or instantaneous." See Wesley, "The Repentance of Believers," Works (BCE), Volume 1, 350.
The interrelationship of faith and repentance for the Christian is explained by Wesley in a series of contrasts, which include the use of Mark 12:30.

By faith we are conscious that our advocate with the Father is continually pleading for us, and thereby continually turning aside all condemnation and punishment from us. By repentance we have an abiding conviction that there is no help in us. By faith we receive not only mercy, but 'grace to help in every time of need'. Repentance disclaims the very possibility of any other help. Faith accepts all the help we stand in need of from him that hath all power in heaven and earth. Repentance says, 'Without him I can do nothing'; faith says, 'I can do all things through Christ strengthening me.' Through him I cannot only overcome, but expel all the enemies of my soul. Through him I can 'love the Lord my God with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength'; yes, and walk in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of my life.  

Wesley illustrates his propensity to string multiplied scripture verses together to reinforce his main point—that being perfection. This pattern is observed in his very early sermon "The Circumcision of the Heart," where he attempts to define perfection.

If thou wilt be perfect, add to all these charity: add love, and thou hast the 'circumcision of the heart.' 'Love is the fulfilling of the law,' 'the end of the commandment.' Very excellent things are spoken of love; it is the essence, the spirit, the life of all virtue. It is not only the first and great command, but it is all the commandments in one. Whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are amiable or honourable; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, they are all comprised in this one word—love. In this is perfection and glory and happiness. The royal law of heaven and earth is this, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.'

In his fourth sermon on the Sermon on the Mount, Wesley begins with his life's theme—the beauty of holiness—which in this case, he describes as "that inward man of the heart which is

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69 Wesley, "The Circumcision of the Heart," Works (BCE), Volume 1, 407. Wesley references in this sequence Romans 13:10, 1 Timothy 1:5, Matthew 22:38, Philippians 4:8 and Mark 12:30. In the very next paragraph of this sermon Wesley again uses Mark 12:30 but only in a repetitive manner. Wesley's next use of Mark 12:30 appears in his introductory remarks in his twenty-third sermon, his third on the Sermon on the Mount. In this section he includes the text as an overall summary or goal for those who are pure in heart. See page 211 of this chapter.
renewed after the image of God." In being transformed "into the likeness of him that created us," Wesley insists that inward holiness reflects the image of Christ in the Christian, which includes "the character, the stamp, the living impression, of his person, who is the fountain of beauty and love, the original source of all excellency and perfection." As he continues to expound on this theme, Wesley leaves no stone unturned in his expectation as to what this perfected holiness will include.

'What is it to worship God, a Spirit, in spirit and in truth?'… It is to believe in him as a wise, just, holy being, of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; and yet merciful, gracious, and longsuffering; forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; casting all our sins behind his back, and accepting us in the beloved. It is to love him, to delight in him, to desire him, with all our heart and mind and soul and strength; to imitate him we love by purifying ourselves, even as he is pure; and to obey him whom we love, and in whom we believe, both in thought and word and work.

Although the doctrine of grace was a dominant theme in Wesley's sermons, it was impossible for him to draw his listener to the grandeur of God's saving grace, without at the very same time reminding them that this grace is completed or demonstrated in a lifestyle that is both "delivered from the power and the guilt of sin."

And we must all declare, 'By grace ye are saved through faith:…not of works, lest any man should boast.' We must cry aloud to every penitent sinner, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' But at the same time we must take care to let all men know we esteem no faith but that which 'worketh by love'; and that we are not 'saved by faith' unless so far as we are delivered from the power as well as the guilt of sin. And when we say,…believe and thou shalt be holy;…Thou shalt have power from him in whom thou believest to trample sin under thy feet; power to love the Lord thy God with all his heart, and to serve him with all thy strength.

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70 Wesley, "Sermon 24, Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Discourse the Fourth," Works (BCE), Volume 1, 531.
71 Ibid, 531-2.
72 Ibid, 544.
73 Ibid, 560.
74 Ibid, 559-60.
Wesley was not only concerned with a lifestyle of holiness, he probed internally to insist that all outward actions must emerge from a pure intention. When Christ spoke of the light of the body being the single eye, Wesley declared "The eye is the intention: what the eye is to the body, the intention is to the soul." The eye could be single, in Wesley's thought, only "when it looks at one thing only…to 'know God, and Jesus Christ…to please God in all things; to serve God…with all our heart and mind and soul and strength." Whatever else Wesley added to his understanding of Mark 12:30, he consistently referred to this text as his all-encompassing call to devotion and whole-hearted love for God.

In his final sermon on the Sermon on the Mount, Wesley returns to Mark 12:30 twice. His first reference appears in his description of the wise man who built his house upon the rock. In his repeated style, Wesley takes this opportunity to unpack in some detail the characteristics of holiness that mark the person who builds his life upon the foundation rock of Christ. His description is wide-ranging, as wide-ranging as any to this point, and seems in some ways to raise the all-encompassing behavioral bar even higher. His second reference to

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75 Wesley, "Sermon 28, Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Discourse the Eighth," *Works* (BCE), Volume 1, 612-3.
76 Ibid, 613.
77 It is this all-encompassing understanding that Wesley appeals to in his next use of Mark 12:30. Referring again to the Sermon on the Mount, he uses this text as his definition of what it means to "love God in the manner the Scripture describes, in the manner God himself requires of us, and by requiring engages to work in us…" See Wesley, "Sermon 29, Upon the Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Discourse the Ninth," Volume 1, 635.
78 Wesley, "Sermon 33, Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Discourse the Thirteenth," *Works* (BCE), Volume 1, 687, 691, 693.
79 "He indeed is wise who 'doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven'. He is truly wise whose 'righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees'. He is poor in spirit; knowing himself even as also he is known. He sees and feels all his sin, and all his guilt, till it is washed away by the atoning blood. He is conscious of his lost estate, of the wrath of God abiding on him, and of his utter inability to help himself till he is filled with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. He is meek and gentle, patient toward all men, never 'returning evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing', till he overcomes evil with good. His soul is athirst for nothing on earth, but only for God, the living God. He has bowels of love for all mankind, and is ready to lay down his life for his enemies. He loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his mind and soul and strength. He alone shall enter into the kingdom of heaven who in this spirit doth good unto all men; and who, being for this cause despised and rejected of men, being hated, reproached, and persecuted, 'rejoices and is exceeding glad', knowing in whom he hath believed…" See Wesley, Ibid, 691-2.
Mark 12:30 is part of his concluding benedictional encouragement to his audience and brings him back to his life's work of communicating a religion of the heart.

Now be thou 'pure in heart'; purified through faith from every unholy affection, 'cleansing thyself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and perfecting holiness in the fear of God'. Being through the power of his grace purified from pride by deep poverty of spirit; from anger, from every unkind or turbulent passion by meekness and meercifulness; from every desire but to please and enjoy God by hunger and thirst after righteousness; now love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy strength. In a word: let thy religion be the religion of the heart. Let it lie deep in thy inmost soul.  

Wesley reverses the word order in a Greek sentence from the New Testament and in so doing produces a completely different meaning to the verse along with the phrase "energy of love." It is this nomenclature that launches him into his next use of Mark 12:30

Is thy faith...filled with the energy of love? Dost thou love God? I do not say 'above all things', for it is both an unscriptural and an ambiguous expression, but 'with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength'? Dost thou seek all thy happiness in him alone? And does thou find what thou seekest?...Is God the centre of thy soul? The sum of all thy desires?  

Through his own word-smithing Wesley introduced the language of "energy" into his various descriptors of perfection, underlining again his tendency to manufacture support for a doctrine that was indispensible to his theology. A similar tendency, this time in the form of circular reasoning, surfaces in his 1762 sermon "Wandering Thoughts." Wesley affirms in this sermon that the true Christian can pray for and be delivered from wandering thoughts, especially those that would tempt one to wander from God and to behave in a manner contrary to God's will. From these, Wesley states, "everyone that is perfected in love is unquestionably delivered. This

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80 Ibid, 698.
81 Wesley, "Sermon 39, Catholic Spirit, Works (BCE), Volume 2, 88. In the above paragraph Wesley's exhortation seems to contradict itself in that he denies that he is asking for a love of God that is above all things, while at the same time describing this love of God as the only source of happiness, the centre of the soul and the sum of all one's desires.
deliverance therefore we may expect…" He intones that wandering thoughts of this nature imply unbelief and perhaps even enmity against God. The orbital pattern of his argument occurs when he goes on to argue that the truly perfected Christian is delivered from such thoughts, and failing that this demonstrates that the person who experiences these thoughts was in fact never saved from sin. He closes the circle of his argument in the final paragraph of the sermon.

Let us pray that we may be delivered from all sin; that both root and branch may be destroyed; that we may be 'cleansed from all pollution of flesh and spirit', from every evil temper and word and work; that we may 'love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength'; so that all 'the fruit of the Spirit' may be found in us—not only 'love, joy, peace'; but also 'long-suffering, gentleness, goodness; fidelity, meekness, temperance.' Pray that all 'these things may flourish and abound', may increase in you more and more, till an abundant 'entrance be ministered unto you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ'!

Wesley never understood "the variety and vehemence of the attacks upon his doctrines, and against Christian perfection in particular." He uses his sermon, "Satan's Devices" to warn of the serious threat that Satan is in clouding Christian truth in the mind of Christians. Within this diatribe Wesley appears to enfold his doctrine of perfection into the meaning of the gospel itself.

The devices whereby the subtle 'god of this world' labours to destroy the children of God, or at least to torment whom he cannot destroy, to perplex and hinder them in running the race which is set before them, are numberless… But it is of one of them only that I now propose to speak…whereby he endeavours to divide the gospel against itself, and by one part of it to overthrow the other.

Having set the stage, Wesley then differentiates between entrance into the inward kingdom of heaven based upon repentance and belief in the gospel and the blessings of the harvest that

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83 Wesley, Ibid, 137.
come later in the Christian's life when that one is able to "love the Lord our God' not only as we do now, with a weak though sincere affection, but 'with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength'.… We expect to be 'made perfect in love', in that love which 'casts out' all painful 'fear',…"  

In his sermon "On Patience," where Wesley uses James 1:4 as his primary preaching text, his propensity to turn once again to the doctrine of perfection whenever he can is clearly seen. As he addresses his own question, "What is the perfect work of patience?" that St. James writes about, Wesley drives home his doctrine of perfection.

Is it anything less than the 'perfect love of God', constraining us to love every soul of man, 'even as Christ loved us'? Is it not the whole of religion, the whole 'mind which was also in Christ Jesus'? Is it not the 'renewal of our soul in the image of God, after the image of him that created us'? And is not the fruit of this the constant resignation of ourselves, body, and spirit, to God—entirely giving up all we are, all we have, and all we love, as a holy sacrifice, acceptable unto God through the Son of his love?"  

Wesley then reminds his listeners that "love is the sum of Christian sanctification," but this love is not present at the commencement to Christian faith. When the Christian arrives at the place of perfected love, all of his/her affections become pure. It is at this juncture that "he now loves God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength, so Jesus now reigns alone in his heart, the Lord of every motion there."

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86 Wesley, Ibid, 139-40.  
88 Wesley, Ibid, 176. It is important to note that this sermon first appeared in 1784, late in Wesley's life. It is apparent that he is still wrestling with the issue of the timing of perfection. "But it may be inquired, In what manner does God work this entire, this universal change in the soul of the believer?… Does he work it gradually, by slow degrees? Or instantaneously, in a moment?... the Scriptures are silent upon the subject; because the point is not determined—at least, not in express terms—in any part of the oracles of God. Every man therefore may abound in his own sense, provided he will allow the same liberty to his neighbor; provided he will not be angry at those who differ from his opinion, nor entertain hard thoughts concerning them. Permit me likewise to add one thing more. Be the change instantaneous or gradual, see that you never rest till it is wrought in your own soul, if you desire to dwell with God in glory." Ibid, 176-7. See also, Wesley, "A Plain Account," Works, Volume 11, 402-3.
While preaching in Ireland in 1778 Wesley addresses the subject of assurance in a very pastoral fashion. He assures his listeners of the ongoing mercy of their God and attempts to calm their despair by affirming that even the fully-sanctified Christian can fall from grace and yet be restored.

We have known a large number of persons, of every age and sex, from early childhood to extreme old age, who have given all the proofs which the nature of the thing admits that they were 'sanctified throughout', 'cleansed from all pollution both of flesh and spirit'; that they 'loved the Lord their God with all their heart, and mind, and soul, and strength'; that they continually presented their souls and bodies 'a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God'; in consequence of which they 'rejoiced evermore, prayed without ceasing, and in everything gave thanks'. And this, and no other, is what we believe to be true, scriptural sanctification.  

In this sermon Wesley—although still thoroughly convinced of his doctrine of scriptural sanctification—demonstrates a conciliatory approach to the subject that is not often apparent. His sensitivity and defensiveness appear to have been mollified somewhat in that he is able to offer a modulated perspective regarding the timing of perfection in a Christian's life. Further, he exposes the vulnerability of his position by admitting that even the Scriptures do not answer the timing question.

The last significant use of Mark 12:30 appears in a very early and unpublished sermon. In this sermon Wesley addresses a phrase drawn from Luke 10:42—"One thing is needful," and indicates that "this great work, this one thing needful, is the renewal of our fallen nature." In explaining his point of view, Wesley uses Mark 12:30 as part of his argument and conjoins it to his main thesis.

To recover our first estate, from which we are thus fallen, is the one thing now needful—to re-exchange the image of Satan for the image of God, bondage for freedom, sickness for health. Our one great business is to raze out of our souls

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the likeness of our destroyer, and to be born again, to be formed anew after the likeness of our Creator….The one work we have to do is to return from the gates of death to perfect soundness; to have our diseases cured, our wounds healed, and our uncleanness done away…. For to this end was man created, to love God; and to this end alone, even to love the Lord his God with all his heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. But love is the very image of God: it is the brightness of his glory. By love man is not only made like God, but in some sense one with him. 


"And he said to all, if any man be willing to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me."

In "A Plain Account," after addressing the question "Is this death to sin, and renewal in love, gradual or instantaneous?," Wesley proposes that the Christian "still grows in grace, in the knowledge of Christ, in the love and image of God; and will do so, not only till death, but to all eternity." He also reminds his readers that this transformative change, whatever the timing, cannot be approached passively. He describes the pattern of waiting for this transformation in great detail and in doing so, borrows from Luke 9:23.

Not in careless indifference, or indolent inactivity; but in vigorous, universal obedience, in a zealous keeping of all the commandments, in watchfulness and painfulness, in denying ourselves, and taking up our cross daily; as well as in earnest prayer and fasting, and a close attendance on all the ordinances of God. And if any man dream of attaining it any other way,…he deceiveth his own soul. It is true, we receive it by simple faith: But God does not, will not, give that faith, unless we seek it with all diligence, in the way which he hath ordained.

In his final use of Luke 9:23 in "A Plain Account," Wesley is chastising those who have taken, as he sees it, undue liberties with the doctrine of perfection. In providing balance to his followers Wesley is particularly strong when including suffering as a badge of perfection.

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91 Wesley, Ibid, 355.
Beware of desiring anything but God. Now you desire nothing else; every other desire is driven out; see that none enter again. 'Keep thyself pure;' let your 'eye' remain 'single, and your whole body shall be full of light.'… Be patterns to all, of denying yourselves, and taking up your cross daily. Let them see that you make no account of any pleasure which does not bring you nearer to God, nor regard any pain which does; that you simply aim at pleasing him, whether by doing or suffering;…94

Although "A Plain Account" contains minimal references to Luke 9:23; Wesley's other writings are replete with the reference—over twenty occasions. In an essay written in 1746, "The Witness of the Spirit," he addresses those within his movement who have diminished the doctrine of perfection by becoming essentially antinomian in terms of their lifestyle choices. Wesley will have no part with any theology or doctrine that countenances such an approach.

But now, looking on himself as 'not under the law', he thinks he is no longer obliged to observe it. He is therefore less zealous of good works, less careful to abstain from evil, less watchful over his own heart, less jealous over his tongue. He is less earnest to deny himself, and to take up his cross daily. In a word, the whole form of his life is changed since he has fancied himself to be 'at liberty'. He is no longer 'exercising himself unto godliness': 'wrestling not only with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers', 'enduring hardships', 'agonizing to enter in at the strait gate.' No; he has found an easier way to heaven: a broad, smooth, flowery path, in which he can say to his soul, 'Soul, take thy ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'95

As Wesley so ordered his sermons, what follows "The Circumcision of the Heart" are two sermons about regeneration and the lifelong pursuit of holiness. In these, according to Outler, Wesley "comes…to his crucial assertion that the regenerate believer receives real power…not to commit sin…. Here Wesley comes as close as he ever will to an unnuanced notion of Christian existence as sinless; he even goes on to denounce those who try to qualify this with the more modest claim that the regenerate 'do not commit sin habitually.'96

94 Wesley, Ibid, 432-3.
Let us well observe what is here taught us by God himself touching this glorious privilege of his children. Who is it that is here said to 'bear witness'? Not our spirit only, but another; even the Spirit of God. He it is who 'beareth witness with our spirit'. What is it he beareth witness of? 'That we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ'—'if so be that we suffer with him' (if we deny ourselves, if we take up our cross daily, if we cheerfully endure persecution or reproach for his sake) 'that we may be also glorified together.'

One of the very visible sins that Wesley condemns is the act of judging others. He warns the Christian against judging others and declares that there is no position in their life, nor any time in their life, "from the hour of our first repenting and believing the gospel till we are made perfect in love, wherein this caution is not needful for every child of God." He considers such behavior in the Christian a mark of hypocrisy and a sign that this Christian has not been, or is not perfected in love. His prescription is to "Cast out the beam of pride. Abhor thyself. Sink down as in dust and ashes... Cast out the beam of self-will. Learn what that meaneth, 'If any man will come after me, let him renounce himself.' Deny thyself and take up thy cross daily."

Wesley's sermon "Self-Denial" is based on Luke 9:23. His remarks however are wide-ranging and ultimately return to the subject of perfection and holiness. In this sermon Wesley castigates those whom he considers to have either not understood or misrepresented this text and its teaching. His list of targets includes Calvinists ("predestinarians"), Moravians (Zinzendorf) and William Law. He goes as far as to conclude that he knows "of no writer in the English tongue who has described the nature of self-denial in plain and intelligible terms such as lie level with common understandings." For Wesley "the 'denying' ourselves and the 'taking up our cross', in the full extent of the expression, is not a thing of small concern. It

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98 Wesley, "Sermon 30, Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Discourse the Tenth," Works (BCE), Volume 1, 651.
99 Ibid, 653.
is...absolutely, indispensably necessary, either to our becoming or continuing his disciples."\textsuperscript{101}

It is only as the followers of Christ are resolute in this doctrine that they "may easily conceive our blessed Lord to act as the physician of our souls, not merely 'for his own pleasure, but for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness'.\textsuperscript{102} Failure to fulfill this cross-carrying directive means that the so-called Christian

is not 'going on to perfection'; he is not, at once, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, panting after the whole image and full enjoyment of God, as the hart after the water-brook.... Therefore his faith is not made perfect, neither can he grow in grace; namely, because he will not 'deny himself, and take up his daily cross'.\textsuperscript{103}

So critical is this text to Wesley's theology of perfection and perfect love that in his exhortation to Christians against spiritual idolatry, he turns once again to Luke 9:23 to drive home his point. For those drifting toward idols or for those already there, his remonstrance is clear.

Is it not high time to come to your senses? At length awake out of sleep, and shake yourself from the dust! Break loose from this miserable idolatry, and 'choose the better part'.... Cry therefore to the Strong for strength.... Help me now to enter into the rest that remaineth for the people of God! For those who give thee their heart, their whole heart!.... Fight the good fight of faith; take the kingdom of heaven by violence! Take it as it were by storm. Deny yourself every pleasure that you are not divinely conscious brings you nearer to God. Take up your cross daily.... Yea, go on in his name and in the power of his might, till you 'know all that love of God that passeth knowledge'.\textsuperscript{104}

The same intense passion is articulated in his landmark sermon "On Working Out Our Own Salvation" from 1785. The importance of this sermon lies in the manner in which Wesley attempted to dissect the relationship between prevenient grace and human effort. As noted earlier, the text of Luke 9:23 appears in his argument and as a critical ingredient for his doctrine of perfection.

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid, 238.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid, 245.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid, 247-8.
\textsuperscript{104} Wesley, "Sermon 78, Spiritual Idolatry," \textit{Works} (BCE), Volume 3, 113-14.
It then only remains that ye deny yourselves and take up your cross daily. Deny yourselves every pleasure which does not prepare you for taking pleasure in God, and willingly embrace every means of drawing near to God, though it be a cross, though it be grievous to flesh and blood. Thus when you have redemption in the blood of Christ, you will 'go on to perfection'.

Perhaps as late as 1787, Wesley wrote a practical sermon in which, perhaps more clearly than in any of his earlier writings, he acknowledged that possibility of two kinds of Christians, each having a legitimate hope of salvation. His description of the second kind of Christian, the one who chose the most excellent way, is reminiscent of Wesley's earlier descriptions.

The other sort of Christian not only abstained from all appearance of evil, were zealous of good works in every kind, and attended all the ordinances of God; but likewise used all diligence to attain the whole mind that was in Christ. They took up their cross daily. They strove, they agonized without intermission, to enter in at the strait gate. This one thing they did; they spared no pains to arrive at the summit of Christian holiness: 'leaving the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, to go on to perfection'; to know all that love of God which passeth knowledge, and to be filled with all the fullness of God.

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106 Outler, "Sermon 89, The More Excellent Way, An Introductory Comment," *Works* (BCE), Volume 3, 262. "This distinction is at least as old as The Shepherd of Hermas, but was developed more explicitly by Clement of Alexandria; cf. The Instructor, I.i-vii, and Stromateis, II.xix-xx, IV.xxi-xxii, V.i-iv." Ibid, 265, note 11.

107 Wesley, "Sermon 89, The More Excellent Way," Ibid, 265-6. The significance of this admission—two kinds of Christians—cannot be muted. Prior to this time, Wesley, with some inconsistency, maintained two stages or parts to conversion-regeneration. "Our spiritual state should be considered distinctly under each of these views…. The moment a man comes to Christ (by faith) he is justified, and born again; that is, he is born again in the imperfect sense, (for there are two [if not more] degrees of regeneration.), and he has power over all the stirrings and motions of sin, but not a total freedom from them. Therefore he hath not yet, in the full and proper sense, a new and clean heart. But being exposed to various temptations, he may and will fall again from this condition, if he doth not attain to a more excellent gift." Wesley, "Principles of a Methodist," *Works*, Volume VIII, 373. I mention some inconsistency, and certainly that is seen in Wesley's 1738 sermon, "Salvation by Faith." His description of salvation in this sermon, at least in nomenclature, contradicts what he wrote in "Principles of a Methodist." "This then is the salvation which is through faith, even in the present world: a salvation from sin and the consequences of sin, both often expressed in the word 'justification', which, taken in the largest sense, implies a deliverance from guilt and punishment, by the atonement of Christ actually applied to the soul of the sinner now believing on him, and a deliverance from the power of sin, through Christ 'formed in his heart'. So that he who is thus justified or saved by faith is indeed 'born again'. He is 'born again of the Spirit' unto a new 'life which is hid with Christ in God'." Wesley, "Sermon 1, Salvation by Faith," *Works* (BCE), Volume 1, 124. The previous declaration is consistent with a broad understanding of justification among the Calvinists of Wesley's time, but is inconsistent with his 1741 sermon "Christian Perfection." Just eight years after staking out his doctrine of perfection clearly in "Circumcision of the Heart," Wesley writes: "In what sense then are Christians perfect? This is what I shall endeavour, in the second place, to show. But it should be premised that there are several stages in Christian life as well as in natural: some of the children of God being but new-born babes, others have attained to more maturity.
Even within the boundaries of a sermon dealing with redeeming the time, including rising early enough to start your day well, Wesley is somehow able to turn this sermon at its conclusion to the theme of holiness. After encouraging his listeners to rise early so as to do the work of God that day, Wesley continues.

Go on to universal self-denial, to temperance in all things, to a firm resolution of taking up daily every cross whereto you are called. God on, in a full pursuit of all the mind that was in Christ, of inward, and then outward holiness; so shall you be not almost, but altogether, a Christian; so shall you finish your course with joy: you shall awake up after his likeness, and be satisfied.\textsuperscript{108}

G. Romans 2:29

"But he is a Jew, who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men, but from God."

One of Wesley's synonyms for the doctrine of perfection was "circumcision of the heart." As noted previously, he preached a sermon with the title "The Circumcision of the Heart" on January 1, 1733 to those gathered in St. Mary's Church and upon noting this in his "A Plain Account," added that the circumcision of the heart," in the sacred writings, is termed holiness; and which directly implies, the being cleansed from sin… the being so 'renewed in the image of our mind,' as to be 'perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect.'\textsuperscript{109}

Wesley's final use of this verse appears in the final section of "A Plain Account," where he appeals to fellow Christians who were with him in the revival movement. His comments are

\textsuperscript{108} Wesley, "Sermon 93, On Redeeming the Time," \textit{Works} (BCE), Ibid, 332. Wesley uses similar language (e.g. "to be not only almost, but altogether, a Christian," "to take up his cross daily") to describe the Christians who willingly and constantly obeys their pastor. See, Wesley, "Sermon 97, On Obedience to Pastors," \textit{Works} (BCE), Volume 3, 380-1.

\textsuperscript{109} Wesley, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection," \textit{Works}, Volume XI, 367. See also p. 368 for Wesley's summary of the circumcision of the heart. See footnote 18 of this chapter for Wesley's summary description of perfection where he also uses the expression "the circumcision of the heart." See also Wesley, "Sermon 17, The Circumcision of the Heart," \textit{Works} (BCE), Volume 1, 401-14.
emotive and it is apparent that the criticism he has received from those within has troubled him greatly.

Will any dare to speak against loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves? Against a renewal of heart, not only in part, but in the whole image of God? Who is he that will open his mouth against being cleansed from all pollution both of flesh and spirit;... What man, who calls himself a Christian, has the hardiness to object to the devoting, not a part, but all our soul, body, and substance to God? What serious man would oppose the giving God all our heart, and the having one design ruling all our tempers? I say, again, let this perfection appear in its own shape, and who will fight against it?.... Why should those who love Christ count it a damnable error, to think we may have all the mind that was in him?.... And why are you so hot against us, because we expect likewise to be sanctified wholly through his Spirit?.... But how long will you who worship God in spirit, who are "circumcised with the circumcision not made with hands,' set your battle in array against those who seek an entire circumcision of the heart, who thirst to be cleansed "from all filthiness of flesh and spirit,' and to "perfect holiness in the fear of God?"

Wesley's most significant use of this text, outside of "A Plain Account," occurs in his sermon "The Circumcision of the Heart." There he, among other things, indicates that the phrase refers to a "circumcision [that] is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter," and that it is "the distinguishing mark of a true follower of Christ."[1]

H. Ephesians 4:13

"Till we all come to the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"

Although Wesley uses this text only once in "A Plain Account," he does reference it multiple times in his other writings. His initial offerings of the verse are helpful, at least, in hearing some of Wesley's thoughts directly related to the doctrine of sanctification.

Therefore, though he is a living man, he is a dead Christian. But as soon as he is born of God there is a total change… The 'eyes of his understanding are

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[10] Wesley, Ibid, 444-5. Wesley adds the word "entire" to underline the complete removal of sin through the experience of perfection. Partial circumcision or forgiveness of sin occurs in the conversion of new birth, but the complete and full removal of sin awaits the time of perfection.

opened’…. And he who of old 'commanded light to shine out of darkness shining on his heart', he sees 'the light of the glory of God', his glorious love, 'in the face of Jesus Christ'. From hence it manifestly appears what is the nature of the new birth. It is that great change which God works in the soul when he brings it into life: when he raises it from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. It is the change wrought in the whole soul by the almighty Spirit of God when it is 'created anew in Christ Jesus', when it is 'renewed after the image of God', 'in righteousness and true holiness', when the love of the world is changed into the love of God’. … This is the nature of the new birth. 'So is everyone that is born of the Spirit.'

Having established a conversion baseline, Wesley goes on to describe the new Christians journey of faith development until "the child of God grows up, till he comes to 'the full measure of the stature of Christ'.” Wesley insists that sanctification is "a progressive work carried on in the soul by slow degrees from the time of our first turning to God.”

When we are born again, then our sanctification, our inward and outward holiness, begins. And thenceforward we are gradually to 'grow up in him who is our head'… A child is born of a woman in a moment, or at least in a very short time. Afterward he gradually and slowly grows till he attains the stature of a man. In like manner a child is born of God in a short time, if not in a moment. But it is by slow degrees that he afterward grows up to the measure of the full stature of Christ. The same relation therefore which there is between our natural birth and our growth there is also between our new birth and our sanctification.

In his sermon dated from 1785, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation," Wesley is careful to distinguish between justification and sanctification. He speaks to the subject of "assisting" grace which leads a person to repentance. "Afterwards we experience the proper Christian salvation, whereby 'through grace' we 'are saved by faith', consisting of those two grand branches, justification and sanctification.” In his detail of description, Wesley appeals both to experience and the Scripture for his authority.

113 Ibid, 193.
114 Ibid, 198.
115 Ibid, 198.
By justification we are saved from the guilt of sin, and restored to the favour of God: by sanctification we are saved from the power and root of sin, and restored to the image of God. All experience, as well as Scripture, shows this salvation to be both instantaneous and gradual. It begins the moment we are justified… It gradually increases from that moment… till in another instant the heart is cleansed from all sin, and filled with pure love to God and man. But even that love increases more and more, till we 'grow up in all things into him that is our head', 'till we attain the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ'.

I. Thessalonians 5:23

"And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly: and may the whole of you, the spirit and the soul and the body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Wesley frequently borrowed from St. Paul's writings to the Thessalonians, particularly verses from 1 Thessalonians chapter 5. In total, Wesley references 1 Thessalonians some fifty times in his sermons. As he answers the question "But whom then do you mean by 'one that is perfect?'" Wesley ultimately appeals to this text. "We understand hereby, one whom God hath 'sanctified throughout in body, soul, and spirit;'… the blood of Jesus Christ his Son having cleansed him from all sin…. This it is to be a perfect man, to be 'sanctified throughout.'" In the Methodist Conference Minutes of 1747, Wesley includes this text as a Scriptural injunction to pray for entire sanctification.

In his sermon "The First-Fruits of the Spirit" of 1741, Wesley struggles deeply with the issue of remaining sin in a Christian, after justification and reconciliation. Here "Wesley is wrestling with the problem of Christian self-accusation. It is a problem for those who already

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117 Ibid, 204.
profess faith in Christ but who retain their guilty memories and are still aware of continued shortfallings.\(^\text{120}\)

Here, then, is an early statement of Wesley's 'third alternative' to two extremes: of Christians, on the one hand, who might continue in sin and still plead Christ's atoning mercies, and Christians, on the other, who sag toward despair under the weight of their guilt-ridden consciences. The crucial distinction is between willful sins—lapses for which guilt and repentance are the sinner's only hope—and the residue of sin in believers for which 'there is therefore now no condemnation in Christ Jesus'. It is this sort of surcease from guilt and anxiety that Wesley here identifies as 'the first-fruits of the Spirit.' This, then, is a preparatory essay on the paradox of a Christian's sensitivity (in repentance) and serenity (in grace).\(^\text{121}\)

"The single most consistent theme in Wesley's thought…was 'holy living' and its cognate goal: perfection….Gradually it had dawned on Wesley that the whole question boiled down to two issues: (1) the definition of 'perfection' in terms of a Christian's love of God and neighbor…and (2) the definition of sin as deliberate."\(^\text{122}\) On December 6, 1784 Wesley once again set to writing the essence of this doctrine.

Why should you be averse to universal holiness…? Is perfection (to vary the expression) the being 'sanctified throughout in spirit, soul, and body'? What lover of God and man can be averse to this, or entertain frightful apprehension of it? Is it not in your best moments your desire to be all of a piece? All consistent with yourself? 'All faith, all meekness, and all love'? And suppose you were once possessed of this glorious liberty, would not you wish to continue therein? To be preserved 'blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ'?\(^\text{123}\)

Earlier in the same year Wesley declared that he believed that "sanctification is commonly, if not always, an instantaneous work."\(^\text{124}\) In addressing how a person attains such sanctification, he insisted on believing that God has promised to save a person from all sin and to fill them with holiness; on believing that this is God's desire and also his capacity; and on believing that


\(^{121}\) Ibid, 233.


it is his desire to save a person "to the uttermost; to purify…from all sin, and fill up your heart
with love." The result of such a progressive belief will be perfection, or entire holiness, true
holiness as reflected in St. Paul's words to the Thessalonians in 1 Thess. 5:23.

J. Hebrews 6:1

"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to
perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works."

The last verse to consider as cited in "A Plain Account" is Hebrews 6:1. As Wesley
provided a summary of his doctrine of perfection from 1764, he made it clear that "There is
such a thing as perfection; for it is again and again mentioned in Scripture. It is not so early as
justification; for justified persons are to 'go on unto perfection.' (Heb. vi. 1.) Beyond this
brief note, Wesley does not appeal to the Hebrews text at any other place in "A Plain Account."
He does however turn to it over a dozen times throughout his sermons.

In his sermon "Satan's Devices," Wesley exhorts true Christians to "expect to be made
perfect in love', in that love which 'casts out' all painful 'fear', and all desire but that of
glorifying him we love, and of loving him and serving him more and more." At the same
time, Christians must be vigilant against the devices of Satan, who desires to supplant the
fulfillment of this expectation. In order to fight off such devices, Wesley, in his conclusion to
this sermon, implores the Christian to fight on in the strength of Christ.

Lastly, if in time past you have abused this blessed hope of being holy as he is
holy, yet do not therefore cast it away. Let the abuse cease, the use remain. Use

126 Wesley wrote a sermon in 1784 entitled "On Perfection" and based the sermon on Hebrews 6:1. See Wesley,
"Sermon 76, On Perfection," Works (BCE), 71-87. In this sermon, Wesley contrasts angelic perfection and pre-fall
Adamic perfection with the perfection that the Christian is now capable of in this life. In answering the question
what then is this perfection, Wesley returns to his mature answer: "This is the sum of Christian perfection: it is all
comprised in that one word, love. The first branch of it is the love of God and….it is inseparably connected with
the second, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself'. Ibid, 72-4.
it now to the more abundant glory of God and profit of your own soul. In steadfast faith, in calm tranquility of spirit, in full assurance of hope, rejoicing evermore for what God has done, 'press ye' on unto perfection.' Daily growing in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and going on from strength to strength, in resignation, in patience, in humble thankfulness for what ye have attained and for what ye shall, run the race set before you, 'looking unto Jesus', till through perfect love ye enter into his glory.  

In his sermon "The Scripture Way of Salvation," based on Ephesians 2:8, Wesley returns to the subject of sanctification and identifies the bifurcation of such into "the gradual work of sanctification" as opposed to "entire sanctification" itself. His thesis is that after a person is born again they have the capacity, through the Holy Spirit, to increasingly mortify the sinful actions of the body. Part of the pathway of mortification includes a zealous approach to virtuous living that includes taking up the cross and denying "ourselves every pleasure that does not lead us to God." It is at this juncture, according to Wesley, that the Christian now waits "for entire sanctification, for a full salvation from all our sins, from pride, self-will, anger, unbelief, or, as the Apostles express it, 'Go on to perfection.'"  

Wesley, who was certainly no friend to predestinarians, nevertheless adopted a diminished Augustinian doctrine of original sin. He differed from Augustine in the emphasis he placed on the restoration of the image of God in man, but beyond that could have easily aligned himself with reluctance with Augustine's view. In his 1759 sermon titled "Original

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129 Ibid, 151.  
131 Ibid, 160.  
133 Wesley applauded Pelagius over Augustine. In sarcastic tones Wesley identified Augustine as "a wonderful saint! As full of pride, passion, bitterness, censoriousness, and as foul-mouthed to all that contradicted him as George Fox himself." See Wesley, "Sermon 68, The Wisdom of God's Counsels," Works (BCE), Volume 2, 556. Wesley believed that Pelagius affirmed the doctrine of perfection as noted in Hebrews 6:1. "I verily believe the real heresy of Pelagius was neither more nor less than this, the holding that Christians may by the grace of God (not without it; that I take to be a mere slander) 'go on to perfection', or, in other words, 'fulfil the law of Christ'...When St. Augustine's passions were heated his word is not worth a rush. And here is the secret. St. Augustine was angry at Pelagius. Hence he slandered and abused him (as his manner was) without fear or shame." (Ibid.).
Sin," Wesley is emphatic both in his description of humanity's depravity and with those who would disagree with such a doctrine. Wesley's encouragement to the Christian from Hebrews 6:1 is to "go on."

Ye know that the great end of religion is to renew our hearts in the image of God, to repair that total loss of righteousness and true holiness which we sustained by the sin of our first parent. Ye know that all religion which does not answer this end, all that stops short of this, the renewal of our soul in the image of God, after the likeness of him that created it, is no other than a poor farce and a mere mockery of God, to the destruction of our own soul. O beware of all those teachers of lies who would palm this upon you for Christianity!... Know your disease! Know your cure! Ye were born in sin; therefore 'must be born again', 'born of God'. By nature ye are wholly corrupted; by grace ye shall be wholly renewed. 'In Adam ye all died;' in the second Adam, 'in Christ, ye all are made alive.' He hath already given you a principle of life, even 'faith in him who loved you, and gave himself for you!' Now 'go on' 'from faith to faith', until your whole sickness be healed...  

In the mid 1750's Wesley addressed the issue of self-denial in the life of a Christian. Without constant attention to this virtue, the potential for a "shipwreck of the faith" increased dramatically. As Wesley views the situation, a Christian who is not practicing self-denial, along with a plethora of additional virtues "is not 'going on to perfection'.  

He is not, as once, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, panting after the whole image and full enjoyment of God, as the hart after the water-brook. Rather he is weary and faint in his mind, and as it were hovering between life and death. And why is he thus, but because he hath forgotten the word of God, 'By works is faith made perfect'? He does not use all diligence in working the works of God.  

As Wesley turned the calendar on the mid 1780's, he became more and more convinced of the critical and perhaps even the eschatological role that the Methodist revival was playing in history. With the seriousness of an end-times prophet, Wesley exhorts his followers to pay

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136 Ibid.
137 Ibid.
attention to the signs of the times around them, and in so doing, maintain their passion for
dperfection.

If you have believed, 'Look to yourselves, that ye lose not what you have
wrought, but that ye receive a full reward!' 'Stir up the gift of God that is in
you!' 'Walk in the light, as he is in the light.' And while you 'hold fast' 'that
which you have attained', 'go on unto perfection.' Yea, and when you are 'made
perfect in love', still, 'forgetting the things that are behind, press on to the mark
for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'

So deeply imbedded was the doctrine of perfection in the mind and heart of Wesley, that when
he has occasion to instruct those who are extending mercy and living out love by visiting those
who are ill, he includes the doctrine as part of their ministration. "You might have abundant
opportunities of comforting those that are in pain of body or distress of mind; you might find
opportunities…of building up those that have believed, and encouraging them to 'go on to
perfection'. At times it is difficult to determine if Wesley, in his exhortation to perfection,
was ever satisfied with where he or his followers arrived experientially. As late as 1788,
Wesley excoriated his followers with what seems to be an always elusive target.

I exhort you, lastly, who already feel the Spirit of God witnessing with your
spirit that you are the children of God, follow the advice of the Apostle, 'Walk
in all the good works whereunto ye are created in Christ Jesus.' And then,
'leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and not laying again the
foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God', go on to
perfection. Yea, and when ye have attained a measure of perfect love, when
God has 'circumcised your hearts', and enabled you to love him with all your
heart and with all your soul, think not of resting there. That is impossible. You
cannot stand still; you must either rise or fall—rise higher or fall lower.

In June 1788, in Wesley's final reference to Hebrews 6:1, he uses the occasion to summarize
perhaps as concisely as in any segment of his writings, his understanding of perfection. After
citing Hebrews 6:1, he then defines perfection as "not only a deliverance from doubts and

fears, but from sin, from all inward as well as outward sin; from evil desires and evil tempers, as well as from evil words and works."\(^{141}\) He then quickly adds a positive translation for perfection by reminding his followers that with the dissolution of the negative within them, God through his Spirit is about the work of "planting all good dispositions in their place."\(^{142}\)

K. 2 Peter 1:3-4

"As his divine power hath given us all things that pertain to life and godliness, thro' the knowledge of him that hath called us by glory and virtue, by which he hath given us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these, having escaped the corruption which is in the world thro' desire, ye may become partakers of the divine nature."

Although not referred to in "A Plain Account," this text is important in Wesley's doctrine of perfection, as it was in the pneumatology of the Greek Fathers. Wesley refers to this Scripture some one dozen times in his writings. It is significant that Wesley's carefully worded account of his Aldersgate conversion has him first, on that May 24, 1738, reading not from Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans, but from 2 Peter 1:4. In his own words, Wesley explains.

What occurred on Wednesday the 24\(^{th}\), I think best to relate at large, after premising what may make it the better understood…. In my return to England, January 1738, being in imminent danger of death, and very uneasy on that account, I was strongly convinced that the cause of that uneasiness was unbelief; and that the gaining a true, living faith was the 'one thing needful' for me…. Others, all of whom testified, of their own personal experience, that a true living faith in Christ is inseparable from a sense of pardon for all past and freedom from all present sins. They added with one mouth that this faith was the gift, the free gift of God; and that He would surely bestow it upon every soul who earnestly and perseveringly sought it. I was now thoroughly convinced; and, by the grace of God, I resolved to see it…. I continued thus to seek it…till Wednesday, May 24. I think it was about five this morning, that I opened my Testament on those words, … 'There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, even that ye should be partakers of the divine nature' (2 Pet. i. 4)…. In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in


\(^{142}\) Ibid.
Aldersgate Street… I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.¹⁴³

Wesley's first use of this Scripture in his Works appears in Sermon 3, "Awake, Thou That Sleepest." Wesley asks a question regarding the state of his listener's soul and then in rapid-fire succession, asks a series of probing questions.

Hast thou oil in thy lamp? Grace in thy heart? Dost thou 'love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength'? Is 'that mind in thee which was also in Christ Jesus'? Art thou a Christian indeed? That is, a new creature? Are 'old things passed away, and all things become new'? Art thou 'partaker of the divine nature'? 'Knewest thou not that Christ is in thee, except thou be reprobate'? ‘Hast thou received the Holy Ghost’? … Dost thou know what religion is? That it is a participation of the divine nature, the life of God in the soul of man: 'Christ formed in the heart', 'Christ in thee, the hope of glory'.¹⁴⁴

Wesley insists that the justified Christian, the one who is born again, "is a child of God, a member of Christ, an heir of the kingdom of heaven."¹⁴⁵ As such, he has power over both outward and inward sin from the moment of justification because, among other things "he is cleansed from 'the corruption that is in the world', having become a partaker of the divine nature."¹⁴⁶

Wesley clearly links the doctrine of perfection, the renewed image of God in the Christian with the "great and precious promises" of 2 Peter 1:4. Late in his ministry he was

¹⁴⁴ Wesley, "Sermon 3, Awake, Thou That Sleepest," Works (BCE), Volume 1, 148-50. Wesley borrows again from this Scripture shortly thereafter in this same sermon in supporting his argument that the Christian is "called to be 'an habitation of God through his Spirit'; and through his Spirit dwelling in us 'to be saint' here, 'and partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light'. So 'exceeding great are the promises which are given unto us', actually given unto us who believe." Ibid, 153.
¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 320-1. Wesley appeals to 2 Peter 1:4 again in establishing his point that the Christian can be saved from all sin, whether sins of omission or commission. See Wesley, "Sermon 14, The Repentance of Believers," Works (BCE), Volume 1, 347; "Sermon 19, The Great Privilege of those that are Born of God," Works (BCE), Volume 1, 423, 432, 435-6.
particularly agitated at the potential and actual dangers that unbridled wealth could be to the

Christian. In no uncertain terms, he articulates his angst in his sermon "The Danger of Riches."

Have you now the same longing that you had once for the whole image of God? Have you the same vehement desire as you formerly had of 'going on unto perfection'? Have they not hurt you by weakening your faith?... Do you endure in all temptations from pleasure or pain, 'seeing him that is invisible'? Have you every day, and every hour, an uninterrupted sense of his presence? Have they not hurt you with regard to your hope? Have you now a hope full of immortality? Are you still big with earnest expectation of all the great and precious promises?  

In his final reference to 2 Peter 1:4 in his sermons, Wesley described the renewal of our fallen nature as the one thing essential to the Christian. Of course, the "one thing" that Wesley describes ultimately is sub-divided into multiplied essentials. He insists that being a partaker of the divine nature requires the demonstration of such in "all our thoughts, and words, and works." He includes appropriating, in the process, "the highest measure we can of that faith which works by love, and makes us become one spirit with God." In such endeavours and actions as these, Wesley is convinced that the Christian is laboring to be made perfectly whole.

III. The Greek Fathers Use of the Same Scripture

A. Irenaeus.

Irenaeus references only two of the scriptural texts that have been cited by Wesley (Matthew 5:8 and 1 Thessalonians 5:23). The Matthaean text appears in a context where Irenaeus is defending the authorial unity of the Old and New Covenants. His remarks address the Gnostic error of Marcion and his followers, who determined that the Old Testament

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149 Ibid, 359.
150 Irenaeus' use of 1 Thessalonians in no way bears on Wesley's usage in that it appears in a non-descript fashion within the larger context of the nature of the soul and the conception of those within the Marcion/Gnostic movement.
contradicts the New, therefore, there must be two different gods responsible for each. Irenaeus unites the authorship of the Old and New Testaments.

For one and the same Lord, who is greater than the temple, greater than Solomon, and greater than Jonah, confers gifts upon men, that is, His own presence, and the resurrection from the dead; but He does not change God, nor proclaim any other Father, but that very same one, who always has more to measure out to those of His household. And as their love towards God (emphasis mine) increases, He bestows more and greater [gifts]; as also the Lord said to His disciples: "Ye shall see greater things than these." And Paul declares: "Not that I have already attained, or that I am justified, or already have been made perfect (emphasis mine). For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect has come, the things which are in part shall be done away." And therefore, when that which is perfect (emphasis mine) is come, we shall not see another Father, but Him who we now desire to see (for "blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God").

In Chapter XX of the same work, Irenaeus continues his defense of the unity of the Godhead by turning to the Old Testament prophets for support. He concludes that "the prophets, then, indicated beforehand that God should be seen by men; as the Lord also says, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). For Irenaeus at this juncture, seeing God included, at some level, participation in God, which was preceded by belief and faith.

…the Father…confers [upon him] incorruption for eternal life, which comes to every one from the fact of his seeing God. For as those who see the light are within the light, and partake of its brilliancy; even so, those who see God are in God, and receive of His splendor. But [His] splendor vivifies them; those, therefore, who see God, do receive life. And for this reason, He,…rendered Himself visible, and comprehensible, and within the capacity of those who believe, that He might vivify those who receive and behold Him through faith.

In seeing God through faith, a man lives and is made "immortal by that sight and attaining even unto God," and his salvation is then being accomplished as he is sanctified.

153 Irenaeus, Ibid.
As noted above, Wesley and Irenaeus connect Scripturally only with Matthew 5:8. However, this single biblical connector does not seem to have impacted each in the same way, other than both concur that salvation, seeing God and participating in Him are preceded by faith and belief and result in complete sanctification.

B. Clement of Alexandria

In Clement, we find numerous textual citations that Wesley found helpful. Clement speaks of wisdom or "gnosis" as a key element in his doctrine of perfection. Such knowledge leads to a growing life of virtue to the place, where, in Book VI of his "Stromata," he speaks of some who have been able "to attain to a perfect virtue, and others have attained to a kind of it. And some on the other hand, through negligence, although in other respects of good dispositions, have turned to the opposite."\(^{155}\) Yet, for the person who comprehends that God has created mankind for immortality," and made him "an image of His own nature;" that one—"who is a Gnostic, and righteous, and holy…hastens to reach the measure of perfect manhood."\(^{156}\) That same Christian Gnostic acknowledges a two-fold repentance in his life; one repentance that occurs simply because a person has sinned, and a second repentance which persuades him "to keep from sinning, the result of which is not sinning."\(^{157}\) In that state, "he will value highest, not living, but living well. He will therefore prefer neither children, nor marriage, nor parents, to love for God, and righteousness in life."\(^{158}\)

As appears, then, righteousness is quadrangular; on all sides equal and like in word, in deed, in abstinence from evils, in beneficence, in gnostic perfection…. As one, then, is righteous, so certainly is he a believer. But as he is a believer, he is not yet also righteous—I mean according to the righteousness of progress.

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156 Ibid.
157 Ibid.
158 Ibid, 503.
and perfection (emphasis mine), according to which the Gnostic is called righteous….so also a divine power of goodness…impresses on [him] something, as it were, of intellectual radiance, like the solar ray, as a visible sign of righteousness, uniting the soul with light, through unbroken love (emphasis mine), which is God-bearing and God-borne. Thence assimilation to God the Saviour arises to the Gnostic, as far as permitted to human nature, he being made perfect "as the Father who is in heaven."159

With this initial reference to Matthew 5:48, it is not difficult to appreciate Wesley's affinity with Clement. Both write repeatedly of perfect virtue, righteousness, holiness and perfection, which ultimately offers the capacity of sinlessness. At the same time, both allow for progress in righteous living that is clearly demonstrated by a deep love for God. Even the bifurcation of sanctification into two clearly identified stages—the first being an initial repentance from sin, followed later by a second repentance which allows a person not to sin—are clear theological and linguistic markers in both Clement and Wesley.

While providing commentary on the Beatitudes, Clement cites Matthew 5:8 and expostulates his understanding of the "pure in heart." He talks about the two paths—works and knowledge—that accomplish the "perfection of salvation."160 He concludes that knowledge, in some measure, purifies the soul and is therefore, good. His understanding of purity is connected to holiness in the widest sense.

Pure then as respects corporeal lusts, and pure in respect of holy thoughts, he means those are, who attain to the knowledge of God, when the chief faculty of the soul has nothing spurious to stand in the way of its power. When, therefore, he who partakes gnostically of this holy quality devotes himself to

159 Clement of Alexandria, Ibid, 503-4. In book VII, Clement borrows from this text again and in so doing, attaches a life of forgiveness to the list of virtues that a perfected Gnostic embraces. "He never remembers those who have sinned against him, but forgives them. Wherefore also he righteously prays, saying, "Forgive us; for we also forgive." For this also is one of things which God wishes, to covet nothing, to hate no one. For all men are the work of one will. And is it not the Saviour, who wishes the Gnostic to be perfect as "the heavenly Father,"… See Clement of Alexandria, “The Stromata, Book VII, Chapter XIII, Ibid, 546.

contemplation, communing in purity with the divine, he enters more nearly into the state of impassible identity,… 161

Clement, as with repentance, speaks of a two-fold type of faith; one of which is preliminary or foundational faith, upon which is built a faith "which admits of growth and perfection." 162

Clement allows for the cooperative efforts of free choice, human efforts and the grace of God for the pursuit of perfection. Still, he acknowledges that "the vision of the truth is given but to few." 163 Those few are identified as the pure in heart. 164

For it is evident that no one during the period of life has been able to apprehend God clearly. But "the pure in heart shall see God," when they arrive at the final perfection. For since the soul became too enfeebled for the apprehension of realities, we needed a divine teacher. The Saviour is sent down—a teacher and leader in the acquisition of the good—the secret and sacred token of the great Providence. 165

True Gnostics, in Clement's thought, embrace the divine vision in "the transcendently clear and absolutely pure insatiable vision which is the privilege of intensely loving souls… Such is the vision attainable by "the pure in heart." 166 Indeed, according to Clement, "This is the function of the Gnostic, who has been perfected, to have converse with God through the great High Priest, being made like the Lord, up to the measure of his capacity, in the whole service of God, which tends to the salvation of men." 167 Further, the Gnostic "is pious, who cares first for himself, then for his neighbours, that they may become very good… For believing and obeying are in our own power." 168

161 Ibid.
163 Ibid, 446.
164 Clement defines purity as "to think holy thoughts." Ibid, 447.
165 Clement of Alexandria, Ibid, 446.
167 Ibid. Clement identifies perfection again as the freedom from sin and the abandonment of passions.
Matthew 5:8 also provides a foundational catechistic launching pad for both Clement and Wesley in their understanding of perfection and holiness. Although Wesley does not in the context of this particular text, write about free will, his overarching affirmation of the cooperative amalgam of free choice, human efforts and the grace of God in the pursuit of perfection is almost templated from Clement's thought on this text. Further, both acknowledge that the pursuit of perfection is something that only a very few attend to. The juxtaposition of both believing and behaving in terms of perfection resonate with both. Clement's understanding of perfection as first including a care for oneself and then the care for neighbours contradicts Wesley's understanding of a primary love for God first, out of which evolves a secondary, but vital love for neighbours. Both Clement and Wesley underline the notion that a full vision or commitment to God within the "perfected" Christian is intended to direct one's energies toward the salvation of people. Ultimately and finally, both men move the Christian from a true vision or love for God to obedience of the commands of God which leads them away from sin and toward righteous living. Obedience is never far from Clement's thoughts, even as he contemplates the love of God in Christ. True instruction that is sourced in God, demonstrates itself in "the exhibition of holy deeds in everlasting perseverance."  

Our Instructor is the holy God Jesus, the Word, who is the guide of all humanity… to us He has addressed the exhortation, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." Wherefore also this is enjoined on us: "Cease from your own works, from you old sins;" "Learn to do well;" "Depart from evil, and do good;" "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity."  

Obedience and sanctification also run together in the thought of Clement. As he offers guidance for the everyday life of the Christian, Clement uses the image of the cross of Christ as a limiting boundary. "We have as a limit the cross of the Lord, by which we are fenced and

hedged about from our former sins. Therefore, being regenerated, let us fix ourselves to it in
truth, and return to sobriety, and sanctify ourselves."171 Such sanctity finds its expression in the
comprehensiveness of Christ's own exhortation in Matthew 22:37-39,172 a conclusion that
Wesley affirmed from the same Matthean text.

Clement, in borrowing the last portion of Romans 2:29 for his argument, asserts that the
driving force in a Christian's life in terms of beneficence toward others, emerges from "his
exceeding holiness" and "the perfection that is in love."173

He impoverishes himself, in order that he may never overlook a brother who
has been brought into affliction, through the perfection that is love, especially if
he know that he will bear want himself easier than his brother. He considers,
accordingly, the other's pain his own grief; and if, by contributing from his own
indigence in order to do good, he suffer any hardship, he does not fret at this,
but augments his beneficence still more. For he possesses in its sincerity the
faith which is exercised in reference to the affairs of life, and praises the Gospel
in practice and contemplation. And, in truth, he wins his praise "not from men,
but from God," by the performance of what the Lord has taught.174

In a powerfully captivating section of "The Stromata," Clement offers an extended description
of the perfect man or Gnostic. As he details perfection, he includes virtue, love, purification
from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, and holiness as indicators of those who strive
after perfection.

Here I find perfection apprehended variously in relation to Him who excels in
every virtue. Accordingly one is perfected as pious, and as patient, and as
continent, and as a worker, and as a martyr, and as a Gnostic. But I know no
one of men perfect in all things at once, while still human…except Him alone
who for us clothed Himself with humanity. Who then is perfect? He who
professes abstinence from what is bad…. Gnostic perfection in the case of the
legal man is the acceptance of the Gospel, that he that is after the law may be
perfect…. And if he conduct himself rightly; and if, further, having made an
eminently right confession, he become a martyr out of love, obtaining

172 Ibid, 292.
174 Ibid, 545.
considerable renown as among men; not even thus will he be called perfect in the flesh beforehand' since it is the close of life which claims this appellation, when the Gnostic martyr has first shown the perfect work, and rightly exhibited it, and having thankfully shed his blood, has yielded up the ghost: blessed then will he be, and truly proclaimed perfect….For those who strive after perfection…here is the specification: "in much patience, in afflictions…in fastings, in pureness…in kindness, in the Holy Ghost, in love unfeigned…in the power of God," that we may be the temple of God purified "from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit."… Let us then..."perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord." … And since the omnipotent God Himself "gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints…till we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man…" we are then to strive to reach manhood as befits the Gnostic, and to be as perfect as we can while still abiding in the flesh… 

Repeatedly Clement texturizes his narrative with this double-pronged emphasis. He acknowledges the beginning point for the knowledge of God commences with faith, followed by the commitment that "the doing of wrong in any way (is) not suitable to the knowledge of God." Nevertheless, this behavioural direction toward positive virtue is not conscripted upon the Christian, but is the result of a voluntary choice. "The soul, which is ever improving in the acquisition of virtue and the increase of righteousness, should obtain a better place in the universe, as tending in each step of advancement…till 'it comes to a perfect man,' to the excellence at once of knowledge and inheritance." Clement repeatedly emphasizes that "it is utterly impossible for anyone to become perfect as God is," yet at the same time urges true Gnostics to pursue perfection because "the Father wishes us to be perfect by living blameless, according to the obedience of the Gospel." This state he identifies as "being sanctified."

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177 Ibid, 525. A little further in Book VII, Clement again references Ephesians 4:13, using it to describe the Gnostic who is the friend and son of God, "having in truth grown "a perfect man, up to the measure of full stature."" Concurrent or perhaps as a precursor to perfection, which he describes as "the contemplation of God," Clement speaks of the Gnostic soul becoming quite pure. Ibid, Chapter XI, 542.
178 Clement of Alexandria, "The Stromata, Book VII, Chapter XIV, 549.
179 Ibid, 548.
Wesley uses the Romans expression "circumcision of the heart" as a synonym for holiness and being sanctified wholly, thus appropriating the same language as Clement. Both men, while commenting on this text speak of being cleansed from the pollution or filthiness of the flesh and spirit. In terms of Romans 2:29, Clement is clear that love for others emerges from "holiness and the perfection that is in love," which of course parallels closely the same formula in Wesley's doctrine of perfection.

There appear to be occasions when Clement's insistence that perfection occurs only after death are modulated to include the possibility of such perfection existing within this lifetime. This twin interpretive possibility is seen clearly in Book I of "The Instructor." Clement affirms "the truth, that perfection is with the Lord," while "infancy and childishness with us, who are always learning." After citing Ephesians 4:13-15, Clement indicates that the apostle Paul was "saying these things in order to the edification of the body of Christ, who is the head and man, the only one perfect in righteousness; and we who are children guarding against the blasts of heresies...are then made perfect when we are the church, having received Christ the head."

Clement insists that although the mystery of Christ was in some measure veiled in the Old Testament era, that veil, in terms of the mysteries of foundational faith have been lifted in the New Testament era and beyond so that "there is an instruction of the perfect." He reminds his readers that the apostle Paul speaks of presenting "every man (the whole man) perfect in Christ; (yet) not every man simply, since no one would be unbelieving. Nor does he call every

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181 Ibid.
man who believes in Christ perfect," but only those who are purified "in body and soul." He then closes this section by quoting from Hebrews 6:1: "Wherefore, leaving the first principle of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection." 

C. Athanasius

Athanasius' use of the cited Wesley texts is limited to three verses: Matthew 5:8, 48 and 2 Peter 1:4. In his disputations against the Arians, Athanasius carefully distinguishes between the nature of the Son and the nature of sons, while at the same time, encourages his readers to imitate the nature and character of God throughout acts of mercy and grace.

…the Saviour says; 'be ye merciful as your Father which is in heaven is merciful;' and 'Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.' And He said that too, not that we might become such as the Father; for to become as the Father, is impossible for us creatures, who have been brought to be out of nothing; but, as He charged us,…not that we might become as God, did He say, 'Be ye merciful as your Father,' but that looking at His beneficent acts, what we do well, we might do, not for men's sake, but for His sake…. For as, although there be one Son by nature, True and Only-begotten, we too become sons, not as He in nature and truth, but according to the grace of Him that calleth, and though we are men from the earth, are yet called gods…as has pleased God who has given us that grace; so also, as God do we become merciful…in order that what has accrued to us from God Himself by grace, these things we may impart to others…For only in this way can we anyhow become imitators, and in no other, when we minister to others what comes from Him….We are made sons through Him by adoption and grace, as partaking of His Spirit…we by imitation become virtuous and sons…

In arguing against those who insist that Christ is simply a creature, Athanasius describes the distinctiveness of the Son in comparison with his created humanity. It is Athanasius' firm conviction that humanity is like Christ only in part, never in whole. The virtues that are perfectly displayed in the Son, are only partially on display within the Christian. "These

\[183\] Ibid, 459.
\[184\] Ibid.
characteristics belong to us, who are originate, and of a created nature. For we too, albeit we cannot become like God in essence, yet by progress in virtue, imitate God, the Lord granting us this grace, in the words, 'be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.'\textsuperscript{186}

In esoteric and post-Platonic language, Athanasius describes the potential of humanity as living outside or above evil, as their knowledge of God and assimilation with Him increases. In the same construction Athanasius appears to append this potential both to the realm of time and to eternity. "In the beginning wickedness did not exist. Nor indeed does it exist even now in those who are holy, nor does it in any way belong to their nature…. For God…made…the human race after His own image, and constituted man able to see and know realities by means of this assimilation to Himself."\textsuperscript{187}

\textldots having the grace of Him that gave it, having also God's own power from the Word of the Father, he might rejoice and have fellowship with Deity, living the life of immortality unharmed and truly blessed. For having nothing to hinder his knowledge of the Deity, he ever beholds, by his purity, the Image of the Father, God the Word, after Whose image he himself is made…exactly as the first of men created…described in the Holy Scriptures…. So purity of soul is sufficient of itself to reflect God, as the Lord also says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."\textsuperscript{188}

The intersection between Wesley and Athanasius in terms of Matthew 5:48 is more subtle than it is overt. Nevertheless, certain affinities between the two can be discerned. Both Athanasius and Wesley appeal as a foundation to their doctrine of divinization (perfection), to humanity's creation in the image of God. Further, although both men are inconsistent in their expression, both allow perfection to be accomplished in this life, not simply in the afterlife. Both use the language of "purity, purity of soul, and purity of intention" to describe, in part, their doctrine of perfection. Finally, although Athanasius speaks clearly of humanity's assimilation into God,

\textsuperscript{186} Athanasius, "To the Bishops of Africa," \textcite{Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers}, 492.
\textsuperscript{187} Athanasius, "Against the Heathen," Ibid, 4-5.
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid, 5.
Wesley prefers to couch his understanding in the more biblical nomenclature of dwelling in God and God dwelling in him. In terms of Matthew 5:48, Athanasius is quick to link behavioural language to his commentary, insisting that perfection includes a commitment to an increasing life of virtue, while Wesley, at least in terms of Matthew 5:48, speaks briefly of the "ruling of our tempers," but does not go further in terms of practical virtue application.

Contrasting the dead life of the wicked who have no part in God in the present or in eternity, Athanasius describes the "saints" who are living as those who continually practice virtue. As a result, they are "pure and without spot, confiding the promise of our Saviour, who said, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God'" (Matthew 5:8). These Christians dwell, as it were in heaven while on earth, for "those who thus live, and are partakers in such virtue, are alone able to give glory to God."  

The connection between Athanasius and Wesley in terms of Matthew 5:8 is tenuous because of Athanasius' lack of commentary on the text and because the only similar emphasis between the two appears in their language of the practice of virtue, of which the purity of heart is but one such virtue.

Athanasius, depending on Ephesians 4:13, further clarifies his famous maxim that God became human so that human beings might become Divine. As Rogers suggests, "Here he makes the blessed exchange more concrete. The body refers humanity to the incarnation; the Holy Spirit refers divinity to the Trinity. It is as if Athanasius had here recast the blessed

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190 Ibid.
exchange like this: the Son bears a human body, that those with bodies might bear his Spirit.\(^{191}\)

The Word then has the real and true identity of nature with the Father; but to us it is given to imitate it, as has been said; for He immediately adds, 'I in them and Thou in Me; that they may be made perfect in one.' Here at length the Lord asks something greater and more perfect for us; for it is plain that the Word has come to be in us, for He has put on our body. 'And Thou Father in Me;' 'for I am Thy Word, and since Thou art in Me, because I am Thy Word, and I in them because of the body, and because of Thee the salvation of men is perfected in Me, therefore I ask that they also may become one, according to the body that is in Me and according to its perfection; that they too may become perfect, having oneness with It, and having become one in It; that, as if all were carried by Me, all may be one body and one spirit, and may grow up into a perfect man.\(^{192}\)

Athanasius, on several occasions, includes the teaching of 2 Peter 1:3-4 in his writings. While declaring that his faith believes "that the coming of Christ was for the salvation of men,"\(^{193}\) he goes on to assert that not only did Christ appear through the incarnation for "the salvation and well-being of man," but he did so also so that "He might make man partake in the divine and spiritual nature."\(^{194}\) Our participation or partaking of the divine nature "is what Peter said, 'that ye may be partakers in a divine nature,' as says too the Apostle, 'Know ye not, that ye are a temple of God?' and "We are the temple of a living God."\(^{195}\) Finally, in "Letter LX, To Adelphius," Athanasius once again clearly speaks of the deification of humanity without reference to the timing of such. As he defends the incarnation of Christ, he declares:

For the Flesh did not diminish the glory of the Word; far be the thought: on the contrary, it was glorified by Him. Nor, because the Son that was in the form of God took upon Him the form of a servant was He deprived of His Godhead. On the contrary, He is thus become the Deliverer of all flesh and of all creation….  


\(^{192}\) Athanasius, "Four Discourses Against the Arians, Discourse III, Chapter XXV, Ibid, 405-6. There is nothing in Wesley, in terms of Ephesians 4:13, that would link him to Athanasius.


\(^{194}\) Ibid.

\(^{195}\) Athanasius, "Four Discourses Against the Arians, Discourse I," Ibid, 316. Clearly Athanasius at this point does not determine to articulate the timing of such partaking—whether in this life or the life to come.
For He has become Man, that He might deify us in Himself, and He has been born of a woman, and begotten of a Virgin, in order to transfer to Himself our erring generation, and that we may become henceforth a holy race, and 'partakers of the Divine Nature,' as blessed Peter wrote.\textsuperscript{196}

Despite Wesley's regular use of this Petrine text, there appears to be no clear line of influence between him and Athanasius, except that both are agreed that being a partaker of the divine nature will result in holy living.

D. Basil of Caesarea

Of the few times that Basil appropriates the texts used by Wesley, only one directly connects to the doctrine of perfection. In "On the Spirit," Basil determines to "investigate what are our common conceptions concerning the Spirit…"\textsuperscript{197} Basil identifies the work of the Holy Spirit with sanctification, virtue and perfection. "We are compelled to…think of an intelligent essence…, generous of It's good gifts, to whom turn all things needing sanctification, after whom reach all things that live in virtue,…perfecting all other things."\textsuperscript{198} Through the assistance of the Holy Spirit, "hearts are lifted up, the weak are held by the hand, and they who are advancing are brought to perfection. Shining upon those that are cleansed from every spot,

\textsuperscript{196} Athanasius, "Letter LX, To Adelphius," Ibid, 576. In Letter V, for Easter, Athanasius speaks of a life of virtue, repentance and partaking of the Word—language akin to that of Peter. "Therefore in all the remaining days, let us persevere in virtuous conduct, repenting as is our duty, of all that we have neglected, whatever it may be; for there is no one free from defilement, though his course may have been but one hour on the earth…let us be prepared to draw near to the divine Lamb….Let us cleanse our hands, let us purify the body. Let us keep our whole mind from guile; not giving up ourselves to excess, and to lusts, but occupying ourselves entirely with our Lord, and with divine doctrines; so that, being altogether pure, we may be able to partake of the Word." Athanasius, "Letter V, Easter 333," Ibid, 519. In his "Letter LIX, To Epictetus," Athanasius adds of Christ of the incarnation, "For what the human Body of the Word suffered, this the Word, dwelling in the body, ascribed to Himself, in order that we might be enabled to be partakers of the Godhead of the Word (emphasis mine)." Athanasius, "Letter LIX, To Epictetus," Ibid, 572.
\textsuperscript{198} Ibid. He identifies further the restoration of what he terms "the Royal Image" in man, as one is purified of his shame and withdrawn from the passions of life. In this process he is able to draw near to the Holy Spirit.
He makes them spiritual by fellowship with Himself.\(^{199}\) It is out of this association and as a result of the assistance of the Holy Spirit that the Christian is able to extend grace to others.

…souls wherein the Spirit dwells, illuminated by the Spirit, themselves become spiritual, and send forth their grace to others. Hence comes foreknowledge of the future, understanding of mysteries, apprehension of what is hidden, distribution of good gifts, the heavenly citizenship, a place in the chorus of angels, joy without end, abiding in God, the being *made like God* (emphasis mine), and, highest of all, the being *made God* (emphasis mine).\(^{200}\)

For Basil, "going forward to the perfection of love and to learn to know him who is truly beloved," is not something available for just any person. Only the one "who has already "put off the old man, which is being corrupted through its deceptive lusts, and has put on the new man," which is being renewed that it may be recognized as an image of the creator" has the true potential for this forward pursuit.\(^{201}\)

Certainly Wesley and Basil connect in their understanding of divinization as the perfecting of love for others in the heart of the Christian. Further, both credit the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit as the One providing the power for the pursuit of virtue. Finally, both Wesley and Basil describe the process of perfection in part, as a renewal of the image of God in the Christian.

E. Gregory of Nazianzus

Gregory's interface with the Scriptures postured by Wesley is indeed cursory and minimal, with perhaps three exceptions. In defending his brief defection from his congregation, Gregory also uses the occasion to expound on the office of the Priest. In some ways his defense is self-aggrandizement, however he does manage to represent well some of the functions of a

\(^{199}\) Ibid.

\(^{200}\) Ibid, 15-16.

Priest, including his capacity to teach and lead people differently depending upon their level of spiritual maturity. In contrast to those "who are in the habit babes and, so to say, new-made, and unable to bear the manly food of the word,"

Others require the wisdom which is spoken among the perfect, and the higher and more solid food, since their senses have been sufficiently exercised to discern truth and falsehood, and if they were made to drink milk, and fed on the vegetable diet of invalids, they would be annoyed. And with good reason, for they would not be strengthened according to Christ, nor make that laudable increase, which the Word produces in one who is rightly fed, by making him a perfect man, and bringing him to the measure of spiritual stature (emphasis mine).

Here Gregory clearly identifies the measure of spiritual stature mentioned in Ephesians 4:13 with the doctrine of perfection, which is produced in a spiritual person through the agency of Christ the Word.

It is here, in Ephesians 4:13 that Nazianzus and Wesley both identify sanctification as progressive but leading to perfection, or "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Beyond this brief encounter there do not appear to be any further Scriptural linkages between the two. While referencing 2 Peter 1:4, Gregory articulates praise to Christ and His work which ultimately leads to humanity's deification.

For in truth He was in servitude to flesh and to birth and to the conditions of our life with a view to our liberation, and to that of all those whom He has saved, who were in bondage under sin. What greater destiny can befall man's humility

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203 Gregory Nazianzus, Ibid.
204 In "Oration III" Gregory identifies the subject of deification as the one which he had chosen to be the guide of his life. "How slow you are, my friends and brethren to come to listen to my words, though you were so swift in tyrannizing over me, and tearing me from my Citadel Solitude, which I had embraced in preference to everything else, and as coadjutress and mother of the divine ascent, and as deifying man, I had especially admired, and had set before me as the guide of my whole life." Gregory Nazianzus, "To Those Who had Invited Him, and Not Come to Receive Him, Oration III, Ibid, 227-8. It would seem from this comment that, in some fashion, Gregory views perfection as part of the journey of faith prior to death. Wesley would concur and also choose the doctrine of perfection as the guide of his life.
than that he should be intermingled with God, and by this intermingling should be deified, and that we should be so visited by the Dayspring from on high…

F. Gregory of Nyssa

Gregory of Nyssa's "Ascetical Works" provide multiple textual commentary on some of the scriptural verses Wesley referenced. Nyssa suggests that Christianity can be defined as "an imitation of the divine nature… if man was originally a likeness of God, perhaps we have not gone beyond the limit in declaring that Christianity is an imitation of the divine nature. Great, indeed, is the promise of this title." According to Gregory, Christ himself leads the Christian in this direction when he commanded us to "be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect.' For in naming the true Father of the faithful, He wishes the Father and those born through Him to be the same in the perfection of the good contemplated in the Father." 

Then you will ask me: 'How could it come about…?' The explanation of this is clear. The Gospel does not order nature to be compounded with nature, I mean the human with the divine, but it does order the good actions to be imitated in our life as much as possible. But what actions of ours are like the actions of God? Those that are free from all evil, purifying themselves as far as possible in deed and word and thought from all vileness. This is truly the imitation of the divine and the perfection connected with the God of heaven.

He extends his description of the lifestyle actions of perfection, insisting "one must look eagerly if he is striving towards the blessed life and desirous of making his own life conform to it." "It is," in Gregory's thought,

'the perfect will of God that the soul be purified through grace,' of all filth, that it rise above the pleasures of the body, and come to God pure…. Such persons the Lord blesses saying: 'Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.'

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207 Gregory of Nyssa, Ibid, 86.
208 Ibid, 87.
And…He urges: 'You, therefore, are to be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect.'

Gregory continually warns the Christian that although Christ will "lead each person to union with the Godhead," this will only occur "if they do nothing unworthy of union with the Divine." If anyone is truly 'the temple of God,' containing no idol or shrine of evil in himself, this person is given a share in the Godhead by the Mediator, having become pure through the reception of His purity…nor does 'the clean of heart' see anything else in himself except God, and, cleaving to Him through incorruptibility, he receives the whole of the good kingdom within himself.

Wesley and Nyssa appropriate Matthew 5:48 as a verse that buttresses their understanding that perfection or true Christianity is the imitation and retrieval of the divine nature and likeness of God in humanity. Both are careful to include the idea of the imitation of Christ in the perfected life of the Christian which includes the purification of the individual to the point where they are cleansed of all filth and ill pleasures.

Gregory is convinced that any linkage with the world in a Christian's life will prohibit that one from faithfully fulfilling the great commandment of Christ in Matthew 22:37. "It is not possible for the one who has turned to this world in his thought, and who worries about it, and busies himself with being pleasing to man to fulfill the first and great commandment of the Lord…" Such an understanding finds complete sympathy with Wesley, especially when he speaks of the impossibility of being what he called "half a Christian." On the contrary, Gregory insists that a new-born or recently-born soul, that has been restored by the Holy Spirit to its original beauty and nature, must continue to nourish itself and "to rear itself by means of every

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210 Ibid.
212 Ibid.
virtue and labor so that it fortifies itself through the power of the Spirit by its own virtue against the unseen robber attacking it with many devices."\textsuperscript{214}

Indeed, It is necessary, therefore, for us to bring ourselves to perfect manhood as the apostle tells us: 'Until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the deep knowledge of the Son of God, to perfect manhood, to the measure of the fullness of Christ: that we may...practice the truth, and so grow up in all things in him who is the head, Christ.'\textsuperscript{215}

For Nyssa, the fuel for practicing the truth and extending efforts toward piety is love, and nothing else. The wholeness St. Paul prays for in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 is never far from Gregory's thought.

"This, therefore, is perfection in the Christian life in my judgment, namely, the participation of one's soul and speech and activities in all of the names by which Christ is signified, so that the perfect holiness, according to the eulogy of Paul, is taken upon oneself in 'the whole body and soul and spirit,' continuously safeguarded against being mixed with evil... Therefore, let no one be grieved if he sees in his nature a penchant for change. Changing in everything for the better...becoming greater through daily increase, ever perfecting himself, and never arriving too quickly at the limit of perfection. For this is truly perfection: never to stop growing towards what is better and never placing any limit on perfection."\textsuperscript{216}

Gregory is convinced that upon conversion, a new creation begins, marked by steadfast charity and firmness in the practice of virtue.\textsuperscript{217} The capstone of such virtue is to "love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."\textsuperscript{218}

'May your spirit and soul and body be preserved sound, blameless in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Do you see what ways he points out as leading to the one goal of salvation and the one goal of being a perfect Christian? This is the

\textsuperscript{215} Gregory of Nyssa, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{218} Ibid, 143.
end towards which it is necessary for the lovers of truth to go, and they must walk in pleasure with striving and zeal, through firm faith and steadfast hope.  

Perhaps it is Nyssa in his description of perfect holiness, his appropriation of "the whole body and soul and spirit" as defining the result of such, his persuasion that perfection cannot be attained quickly, that it is a target toward which one is continually striving and his conviction the love of God and the love of neighbor mark the capstone of perfection speaks clearly into Wesley's formulation of the doctrine of perfection.

G. John Chrysostom

Given the extant volumes of Chrysostom's works, it is no surprise that his usage of particular texts comes into contact with Wesley's use in a wider way. At the same time, however, some of the key texts used by Wesley are not given a first glance by Chrysostom. He does extol a life of virtue assisted by the Holy Spirit. "Let us glorify God in all things, by a heedful way of life, and let us not feel confidence in the virtues of our ancestry…For this is not…the relationship of Christians, for theirs is the kinsmanship of the Spirit."  

Let us then also become the sons of the Saints, or rather let us become even God's sons. For that it is possible to become sons of God, hear what he says, "Be ye therefore perfect, as your father which is in Heaven." (Matt. v. 48). This is why we call Him Father in prayer, and that not only to remind ourselves of the grace, but also of virtue, that we may not do aught unworthy of such a relationship. And how it may be said is it possible to be a son of God? By being free from all passions, and showing gentleness to them that affront and wrong us.

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219 Ibid.
221 Chrysostom, Ibid, 495. In the same paragraph Chrysostom extols the life of virtue, not only as a demonstration of love to others, but because "we commit many transgressions every day." (Ibid, 495) Using the vivid imagery of a beautiful woman, Chrysostom extols a life of virtue that allows the Christian to see God. The head of all virtue and the mother of wisdom is humility. Humility spawns ever increasing virtues. "And if thou wilt see the eyes also, behold them exactly delineated with decency and temperance. Wherefore they become also so beautiful and sharp-sighted, as to behold even the Lord Himself. For "Blessed," said He, "are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Chrysostom specifically adds benevolence and kindness to his catalogue of virtue and states "the spirit that
While providing Homilies on Genesis, Chrysostom offers an insightful commentary on Mark 12:30.

This is the summit of virtue, the foundation of all of God's commandments: to the love of God is joined also love of neighbor. One who loves God does not neglect his brother, nor esteem money more than a limb of his own, but shows him great generosity, mindful of him who has said, "Whoever did it to the least of my brothers did it to me." He is aware that the Lord of all considers as done to himself what is done in generosity to the poor in giving relief.\

Wesley, like Chrysostom links a virtuous life and the cleansing from sin or freedom from all passions as part of the practice of perfection for the Christian. Like Chrysostom, Wesley considers the clearest understanding of perfection to be encapsulated in the text of Matthew 22:37 and Mark 12:30. Chrysostom, as observed, describes Mark 12:30 as the summit of virtue in terms of a life of perfection.

In his Homily on Ephesians 1:1-10, Chrysostom defines a partnership between God and the believer in terms of heaven and earth, salvation and holiness. He introduces the section with an appeal to Matthew 5:8 among others, and proceeds from there to outline his synergism.

But wherefore hath He chosen us? "That we should be whole and without a blemish before Him." That you may not then, when you hear that "He hath chosen us," imagine that faith alone is sufficient, he proceeds to add life and conduct. To this end, saith he, hath He chosen us, and on this condition, "that we should be whole and without blemish."\

He then presses his point, insisting that God's choice of men for salvation is indeed an act of love on God's part, and a recognition of the moral goodness in man. Further, the goodness of God is seen in his action of making or rendering us holy, but in return, we must continue to live in holiness. Chrysostom goes as far as to declare that God "requires that holiness on which the


Such declarations precede Augustine's more pessimistic view of the nature of man before regeneration, and also anticipate the yet future arrival of so-called Pelagianism and its cousin, semi-Pelagianism. Nevertheless, Chrysostom returns to Matthew 5:8 in his "Homilies on Timothy," and there instructs his listeners that just as they were attracted to the God of heaven because of his mercy and love for humanity, so God is attracted to them as they extend mercy to others out of the purity of their hearts. In other words, love for God must translate into pure actions of love toward others. In that constant direction of living, Chrysostom can at times appear to speak of the possibility of being sinless in this life. After citing Matthew 5:8, he explains his understanding of purity. "By "pure," He meaneth not those who are free from fornication only, but from all sins (emphasis mine). For every sin brings filth upon the soul. Let us then use every means to wipe off the filthiness. He details some of this filthiness as "envy, and wrath, and jealousy, and pride, and vain-glory, and evil concupiscence, and every profane love and every distemper," and exhorts the Christian to distance himself from such and in so doing, "keep his own soul pure." "For no other cause than this did Christ say that the sign of perfect love towards Him is the loving one's neighbors." Chrysostom then supports this declaration by reference to Matthew 22:37. In

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224 Ibid.
228 Ibid.
defining "perfection," he appeals to Hebrews 6:1 for the Christian to live "the best life...(the) purity of life. And without this it is not possible to be a Christian."\textsuperscript{229}

In both Wesley and Chrysostom there is consistency in terms of what both view as sin or filthiness in life. They regularly refer to envy, malice, wrath, and pride as the telltale marks of one who is yet to be free from all sins and one who has yet to have reached a purity of life or a life that is free from all passions.

H. Macarius

Macarius speaks passionately about "a perfected love to the Lord," which he finds illustrated in the life of Job and Abraham.\textsuperscript{230} He contends that those who "wish to be fellow-heirs of these men must love nothing besides God," and understand the "straight character of a whole-hearted and perfected love to the Lord."\textsuperscript{231} Such individuals will have the capacity to remain true to faith even in the midst of great difficulties. "Such can go through their conflict to the end—who have always heartily loved God and God only, and have loosed themselves from all love of the world. But few, and very few, are found who have taken up a love like this."\textsuperscript{232}

For those who wish really to come through to the end in good living must not willingly admit and combine any other love or affection with that heavenly one, for fear of being hindered from spiritual things, and turning backward, and at last being exiled from life. Great and unspeakable and inestimable are the promises made by God; and in proportion to them great faith and hope and labours and conflicts are required, and much trial. …The Lord cries, \textit{If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily rejoicing and follow Me}... But most men wish to attain the kingdom, and would like to inherit eternal life, but do not refuse to live to their own wills and to follow

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{229} Chrysostom, "Homilies on the Epistle to the Hebrews, Homily IX, Ibid, 409. Surprisingly, with the declared text as Hebrews 6:1, his commentary on the subject of "perfection" is very limited.
\item \textsuperscript{231} Macarius, Ibid, 49.
\item \textsuperscript{232} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
them out. Not denying themselves, they wish to inherit eternal life; and this is impossible.\(^{233}\)

Such descriptors and delimitations regarding perfection are consistently heard in the writings of Wesley. Indeed, it is impossible to read Wesley and not be confronted with the dual emphases of the religion that impacts both the soul and the body—at least in terms of perfected actions and divine focus. In both Macarius and Wesley it is impossible to separate believing from behaving and both men continually exhort their followers to the same. Wesley's commentary of Matthew 5:8 employs the same delimiting language in terms of the numbers of individuals who attain to the way of universal holiness. Wesley speaks of those who love God with all their strength as being thinly scattered over the earth while Macarius speaks of those who turn back and who consistently attempt to mix inferior loves with true and prioritized love for God.

Macarius is equally inflamed when he speaks of man's capacity to deal with outward and inner sin. He allows no quarter for anyone who would suggest that humanity's attention should only be focused on "the fruits that are visible, and that it is for God to rectify the things that are hidden."\(^{234}\)

\[\ldots\text{to root out sin and the evil that is ever with us, this can only be accomplished by the divine power. It is not possible or within a man's competence to root out sin by his own power. To wrestle against it, to fight against it, to give and receive blows, is one thing; to uproot is God. If thou hadst been able to do it, what need was there of the coming of the Lord? As the eye cannot see without light, so he cannot be saved without Jesus, nor enter into the kingdom of heaven.}\(^{235}\)

\(^{233}\) Macarius, Ibid, 43. He immediately expands his exhortation. "The Lord's saying is true. The men who come through without falling are those who according to the Lord's commandment have wholly denied themselves, and have abhorred all the desires, and entanglements, and excitements, and pleasures, and businesses of the world, and who keep Him only before their eyes, and desire to do His commandments, so that each man by his own will turns away, even from a kingdom, and positively would not wish to have it, or to love anything along with that love, by being pleased with any pleasures or desires of this world, instead of keeping his whole love, to the utmost of his will and choice, fixed upon the Lord." Ibid, 43-4.


\(^{235}\) Ibid, 17-18.
Macarius then describes the true Christian's battle with sin that exists within his soul. The challenge is not simply outward conduct, it is the "ten thousand departments" of sin that must be battled. He describes the back and forth conflict between the soul and sin as if it was a personal wrestling match. In this struggle, Macarius offers present and future hope.

    By resisting and taking trouble and pains, the will begins to get the upper hand. It falls; it recovers itself. Sin throws it again in ten, in twenty conflicts. It conquers the soul and throws it; then the soul after a time in one engagement conquers the sin. If the soul perseveres and in no direction flags, it begins to have the best of it...and to carry off the trophies of victory from sin. But if the man is strictly examined even at this point, sin still is too hard for him, and until he comes to a perfect man, to the measure of his stature, and perfectly conquers death...

Macarius again appeals both to Ephesians 4:13 and Matthew 5:8 when answering the question, "Is it by degrees that evil is diminished and rooted out, and a man advances in grace? Or is evil rooted out at once, when he receives a visitation?"  

    ...it is only little by little that a man grows and comes to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature, not, as some say, "Off with one coat, and on with another."... if the world of sense has...a series of promotions, and increases the number of grades, and then, through much practice and many a testing, the man who gets through it is made perfect...in the heavenly palace those who wait upon the heavenly King are the blameless, the irreproachable, the pure in heart.... In the spiritual order, it is the souls that are adorned with all good manners which have the society of the heavenly King.... How much more does that house of the soul, in which the Lord rests, require cleaning, that He may be able to enter in and rest there, who is without spot or blemish! In such a heart God and the whole church of heaven rests.  

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236 Ibid, 18. Macarius concludes this homily in the next paragraph and as he does seems to contradict his previous word regarding the temporal possibilities, or lack thereof, in a Christian's struggle with sin. He declares that the mind "possesses a power that is well balanced against sin, to withstand and repel its suggestions. If you say that the opposing power is too strong, and that evil has complete sovereignty over man, you make God unrighteous when He condemns mankind for submitting to Satan...I tell you that the human mind is a good match for the enemy and evenly balanced against him; and a soul of that kind, when it seeks, finds help and succor, and redemption is vouchsafed to it. The contest and struggle is not an unequal one. Let us glorify the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost for ever. Amen." Ibid, 19.

237 Macarius, Homily XV, Ibid, 126.

Wesley's use of Ephesians 4:13 is similar to that of Macarius, especially in terms of his emphasis regarding the process of sanctification. Both speak of the gradual and slow growth into perfection. Both men place a premium on the work of the Holy Spirit in assisting in the process of moving toward perfection and describe the destination as being renewed into the image of God.

Macarius also speaks of Satan and his power that attempts to disrupt the fellowship that redeemed humanity can enjoy with God and angels, who in fact, "seek after (this) for fellowship with themselves and for a kingdom!"\(^{239}\) In some measure Macarius places that kingdom within the soul of humanity while on earth, while at other times, views the same as yet a future possession.

Macarius articulates a robust pneumatology "for those to whom it has been given to become children of God, and to be from above of the Spirit, who have within them Christ shining and refreshing them, are led in many different ways of the Spirit, and acted upon by grace invisibly in the heart."\(^{240}\) The intended goal of the Spirit's various "dealings of grace in the heart," is "to restore (the soul) to the heavenly Father perfect and faultless and pure."\(^{241}\) The dimensions of this perfection translate into a life of virtue and excellence, and do not appear to be reserved for eternity alone.

For when the soul arrives at the perfection of the Spirit, perfectly cleansed from passion, and united and mingled with the Spirit Paraclete by that unspeakable communion,…then it is made all…gladness, all love, all compassion, all goodness and loving-kindness….so these men, mingled in every way with the Spirit, are made like Christ, having in themselves the virtues of the power of the Spirit unalterably, being faultless and spotless and pure within and without. Restored by the Spirit, how can they produce outwardly the fruit of evil? At all times and in all circumstances the fruits of the Spirit shine forth in them. Let us

\(^{239}\) Ibid, 128.  
\(^{240}\) Macarius, Homily XVIII, Ibid, 154.  
\(^{241}\) Ibid, 155.
then beseech God, and believe in love and much hope, that he may give us the heavenly grace of the gift of the Spirit, that...we may be allowed to attain the perfection of the fullness of Christ, as the apostle says, That ye may be filled with all the fullness of Christ, and again, Till we all come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.\textsuperscript{242}

Macarius frames his theology of suffering within the great spiritual battle against the darkness of man's nature. Even the one who has withdrawn from the world finds himself at war with his own nature "in its old habits and custom."\textsuperscript{243} Macarius describes this battle as "thoughts against thoughts, mind against mind, soul against soul, spirit against spirit."\textsuperscript{244} In this ongoing battle or conflict, Macarius is confident that the Lord "is nigh thy soul and body, seeing that battle, and puts in thee secret heavenly thoughts, and begins to give thee rest in secret."\textsuperscript{245} Ultimately, in this temporal struggle, God has allowed the Christian to be "chastened for a while, and grace provides that thou shouldest come into these very afflictions... So does grace chastise thee by design, until thou comest unto a perfect man."\textsuperscript{246}

Macarius is convinced that all those who came before him, in terms of those who followed after Christ, preferred "before all things the Spirit's love of God and the Spirit's good, not in word only or in mere knowledge, but in word and deed as well, by actual practice."\textsuperscript{247} He cites specifically their behavior toward those who came against them and indicates that "they neither denied those who were good, nor blamed those who were evil," and maintained "a well-disposed benevolence towards all," following in obedience the words of Christ, "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven."\textsuperscript{248} That such behavior in this life was, at one level, difficult if not

\textsuperscript{242} Ibid, 156.
\textsuperscript{243} Macarius, Homily XXXII, Ibid, 238.
\textsuperscript{244} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{245} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{246} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{247} Macarius, Homily XXXVII, Ibid, 251.
\textsuperscript{248} Ibid.
impossible, Macarius assures his audience that indeed this is possible only with the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

Let us therefore pray to partake of the Holy Spirit in full assurance and experience, and to enter in whence we came out, and that for the future the serpent may be kept away from us, the parent of wrath, the counselor of vain glory, the spirit of carking and surfeiting; so that having gained a firm faith we may keep the commandments of the Lord, and may grow up in Him unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature, that we may no longer be under dominion to the deceit of this world, but may be in the full assurance of the Spirit…

Macarius devotes his twenty-fifth Homily to the struggle of humanity to escape the corruption of their fallen nature. He insists that the one "who wishes to be a partaker of the divine glory…ought with insatiable affection and an inclination which is never filled, with all his heart and all his might…seek the help which comes mightily from God." The promise of 2 Peter 1:4, in Macarius' thought, is elusive. "We have not yet born the image of the heavenly, nor been made conformed to His glory… We have not yet been mingled with the sun of righteousness, nor begun to flash with His rays. We have not yet received the likeness of the Lord nor been made partakers of the divine nature." According to Macarius we have not been "smitten with the passionate love or God, or stricken by the spiritual charity of the Bridegroom." Our chosen lifestyle modeling of pure love for God and pure love for others is still lacking, and as a result we "have not experienced the power and peace that there is in sanctification." Although it is apparent that Macarius' lofty language is pointed toward eternity in the presence of God, still that does not restrict his application and exhortation for the

\[249\] Macarius, Ibid, 253.
\[250\] Macarius, Homily XXV, Ibid, 179.
\[251\] Ibid, 180-81.
\[252\] Ibid, 181.
\[253\] Ibid.
Christian to "labour to become a child of God without fault," in this life. In fact, his final appeal in this Homily is to seek after "the burning of the Spirit" in this life.

This fire drives away devils, and destroys sin; but it is the power of resurrection, and the effectual working of immortality, the illumination of holy souls, and the strengthening of rational powers. Let us pray that this fire may reach us also, that always walking in light, we may never for a moment dash our feet against a stone (and) that enjoying ourselves among the good things of God we may rest with the Lord in life…

In the broadest sense, it is apparent that Wesley's doctrine of perfection affirms the direction and conclusions of Macarius based on his comments surrounding 2 Peter 1:4, it is surprising that Wesley, in his use of the text, does not seem to follow the pattern of language or thought that is in Macarius. Both men press for the fulfillment of 2 Peter 1:4 in the present life and behavior of the Christian, while at the same time, hedge that same fulfillment by casting perfection into the future and eternal life of the Christian. The closest nomenclature between Macarius and Wesley from this text would be their description of participation in the divine nature as being marked by love and assistance by the Holy Spirit, which preeminently entails the present tense modeling of pure love for God and pure love for others in the life of the Christian.

The "already, but not yet" participation in the divine continues to present itself in the writings of Macarius; at times leaning toward one side of the equation and at other times including both sides. He is convinced that the Scriptures were sent through men, declaring to humanity "that they should pray to God and believing should ask and receive a heavenly gift of the substance of His Godhead; for it is written, That we should be made partakers of the divine

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254 Ibid, 182.
255 Macarius, Ibid, 184.
If man will not ask for this gift, in Macarian theology, that one is "liable to death, because he did not choose to receive from the heavenly King the gift of life, without which it is impossible to obtain immortal life, which is Christ." Clearly, the life in the Spirit precedes and qualifies one for immortal life.

In his Homiletical Discourse XLIV, Macarius uses the entire Homily, with the exception of the last paragraph, to describe the changes made in the converted soul that qualify it for eternal life. Without a divine healing of the soul, "there is no entrance" for a person "into the heavenly church of the Lord." This healing entails, among other things, a complete change in the human soul, "from sin into His own goodness and loving-kindness and peace, by the holy and good Spirit of promise." The apparent intended meaning is that all of this is simply a prerequisite or precursor for entrance into the eternal kingdom of heaven. However, Macarius then reverses course to some measure, and exhorts his listeners to a present-tense participation in the divine nature, prior to entrance into the kingdom.

We must love the Lord, and be diligent every way in all virtues, and ask persistently and continually, so as to receive the promise of His Spirit completely and to perfection, that our souls may be brought to life while we are still in flesh (emphasis mine). For if the soul shall not receive in this world (emphasis mine) the hallowing of the Spirit through much faith and prayer, and be made partaker of the divine nature, being mingled with grace whereby it shall be able to fulfil every commandment unblameably and purely, it is not made for the kingdom of heaven.

Part of the solution to the paradox of living now as a partaker of the divine nature and living then—in the heavenly kingdom as such—is appropriated when one understands the semi-duality of Macarius' theology. Macarius constructs a framework when the soul "may pass in

258 Ibid, 276.
259 Ibid, 280.
mind into another world and age, according to the apostle. *Our conversation*, he says, *is in heaven.*" As one renounces this world and has separated himself from the pleasures of the world, he "must firmly believe that we ought in mind to pass even now through the Spirit into another age, and there...have our conversation and pleasure and enjoyment of spiritual good things." It is in that environs, where the individual is "delivered from the prison of the darkness of the wicked rule...the soul finds pure and divine thoughts, because it has seemed good to God to make man *partaker of the divine nature.*"

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261 Ibid.
262 Ibid, 305-6.
I. Introductory Remarks

As outlined in the first chapter, the primary purpose of this thesis was to investigate and determine the degree of influence that the doctrine of theosis of a cadre of Eastern Church Fathers may have had on John Wesley's doctrine of perfection. Attempting to navigate the influence highway from the writings of the Greek Fathers of the fourth century to the multiplied volumes of writings of the eighteenth century's John Wesley is a daunting and sometimes frustrating task. Moreover, even if such a journey can be completed, the degree of influence remains elusive. Nevertheless, the work of this writer certainly underlines Wesley's Eastern orientation theologically. In fact, from this research it would be difficult to conclude any other significant orientation, in terms of his view of sanctification and the doctrine of perfection, even though Wesley periodically wanders into Western theological zones. Nevertheless, his overarching ethos and approach declares his Eastern proclivity loudly and clearly. Further, although this work acknowledges the patristic renaissance within the Church of England and among the Anglican Divines of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, the line of influence to Wesley remains unclear given that much of the Anglican resurgence in the study of Patristics did not include to any focused degree, the doctrine of perfection. Although it is evident that Wesley was certainly cognizant of the works of multiple Anglican Divines, the evidence for direct influence, particularly in Wesley's doctrine of perfection, is limited and not broadly demonstrated. Given the rancor and animosity that Wesley dealt with because of his doctrine of perfection, one would have expected, in an attempt to defend his beliefs, at least
some direct reference to the work of the Anglican Divines who preceded him and whose theological viewpoints supported his. This by far, would have been the most natural and convenient way for Wesley to declare his allegiance to the Church of England theologically, while at the same time, deter some of his critics who used his doctrine of perfection against him and as evidence that such a theological perspective was not Scriptural at best, and heretical at worst. That is not to suggest that Wesley ignored the Anglican Divines in other areas, as such is not the case (e.g. ecclesiology, liturgy and general creedal matters).

II. Initial Conclusions Relating to Influence

A. Chapter Two

Although this chapter approached the Wesley and Greek Fathers continuum with broad-brush strokes, in an attempt to provide critical and foundational information, nevertheless, as suggested in the chapter itself, several affinity markers should not quickly be overlooked. This is especially important given Wesley's editing techniques, which at the very least, disguised his original source material. That being said, a disguised source is not necessarily an unknown source if similar nomenclature and thematic emphases appear in both or among all.

Chapter Two established without hesitation John Wesley's Eastern persuasion theologically. Not only his pneumatology, but also his views of anthropology and soteriology strike multiple chords of Eastern theology. Wesley himself declared as much as he articulated and linked the religion of the primitive Church with the writings of several prominent Eastern Fathers of which he declares familiarity.¹ In Wesley's mind, the primitive Church was

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¹ See Footnote 76, Chapter 2, 48.
equivalent to the biblical church, which was the holy church. It is within this primitive, biblical, and holy church where the whole gospel, which included the doctrine of perfection, would be protected and transmitted to future generations. Given the fact that John was encouraged and exhorted by his own father toward the flame of the early Church Fathers, one can hardly underestimate the pressure and lasting influence of that paternal direction, for it was during John's formative years that this kind of targeted study began in his life.

Chapter Two also provided a declared link between Wesley and Clement of Alexandria. This link is overt and exceptional in that Wesley makes little attempt to camouflage his admiration and use of Clement, and in fact, in a rare expression of transparency clearly identifies Clement as the source for Wesley's writing on "The Character of a Methodist." That being the case, the emphasis that Wesley places on perfection, purity of heart, love for neighbours, victory over the passions of sin, and a life of obedience and holiness, find their ancestral precursors in the work of Clement of Alexandria. It was also demonstrated in Chapter Two that Clement's discourses on perfection in "The Stromata" find almost exact parallels in Wesley's "The Character of a Methodist." These parallels are so closely aligned that one must acknowledge the direct influence Clement had on Wesley's formation of this tract.

In addition, Chapter Two provided informed linkage between Macarius and Wesley, particularly with their emphases on the recovery of the divine image in humanity, union with Christ which translates into holiness of life, and faith and love cooperating together to fulfill the law of God in the life of the Christian. Each of these markers, independent of each other,
could be assigned to coincidence, but when in combination, intentionality becomes a factor. Macarius and Wesley also embraced the progressive spiritual journey towards perfection, which they summarized as perfect love for God.\(^5\) Within this journey, Wesley and Macarius concur that even with such a noble goal, sin within the life of the Christian is still possible and as such, creates seriously negative results. Although Wesley appears to have modulated his view of sin in the life of the Christian over the course of his years, at this juncture he clearly identifies the writings of Macarius as his source.\(^6\) Wesley also found affinity with Macarius in that both taught the synergism between the divine grace of God and human effort in the pathway to perfection-salvation.\(^7\)

Finally, Chapter Two demonstrated consistent therapeutic, soteriological, and pneumatological language used by both Chrysostom and Wesley,\(^8\) which is consistent with the approach to salvation of both men.

**B. Chapter Three**

To some scholars, the lack of clarity surrounding John Wesley's sources is emphatically answered by compassing the renewed Patristic interest of the Anglican Divines beginning particularly in the sixteenth century. The summary conclusion from this group is that Wesley was simply in the right place at the right time theologically and that his theological propensities, far from being mined from the works of the Eastern Fathers, were nurtured in the renewed soil of the theological tradition of the Church of England. It was to this claim that the third chapter was written, in an effort to trace pneumatological influence from selected Anglican Divines that had found its way into the theological declarations of Wesley. Chapter

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\(^5\) See Footnote 134, Chapter 2, 63.
\(^6\) See Footnote 136, Chapter 2, 63.
\(^7\) See Footnote 141, Chapter 2, 65.
\(^8\) See Footnotes 192 and 193, Chapter 2, 80-1.
Three made no attempt to deny the theological inheritance that Wesley was born into, but in fact, affirmed such a movement within the Church of England. Nevertheless, the methodology of the chapter focused on selected Anglican Divines whom Wesley acknowledged in some measure in his writings; and on their expression of the doctrine of perfection, if any, and on Wesley's subsequent use of their work in his own writings. The challenge of Chapter Three was to attempt to demystify Wesley's lack of credible and thorough referencing in terms of the Anglican Divines.

In spite of this challenge, although Wesley is strangely muted in his direct referencing of the Divines, Chapter Three found affinity between Lancelot Andrewes and Wesley, particularly with their duet of emphases on the practical life implications of Christian faith and the supremacy of Scripture in articulating both that faith and its applications. Further, Andrewes insistence that the Christian must receive the Holy Spirit in order to grow in grace and become a partaker of the divine nature,⁹ finds close alignment with Wesley. Nevertheless, Wesley offers no direct or even indirect suggestion that in Andrewes he found a theological ally.

Chapter Three also demonstrated the same silence in terms of Wesley's approbation of Richard Hooker's theological writings. At the same time, the chapter did underscore a fundamental difference in perfection theology between Hooker and Wesley, in that Hooker emphatically concluded that such a destination is unattainable in this life, which contrasted with Wesley's position that such is indeed possible in this life.¹⁰ Further, Wesley believed that perfection could occur in an instant of time, while Hooker concluded that sanctification, and therefore ultimately perfection, remained a slow process of growth in the life of the Christian

⁹ See Footnote 67, Chapter 3, 103 and Footnote 71, Chapter 3, 104.
¹⁰ See Footnote 93, Chapter 3, 110.
that would only culminate after death.\footnote{94, Chapter 3, 110.} Still, Hooker's use of therapeutic language in terms of soteriology and his emphasis that the Holy Spirit sanctifies and saves throughout would later be affirmed by Wesley in his own writings. This research suggests that Wesley was more a student and absorber of Hooker's theology than Wesley himself admits.

As noted in Chapter Three, Wesley directly assigns the credit for nurturing Wesley's doctrine of perfection to Jeremy Taylor. Although Taylor's articulation of the doctrine of perfection is not a dominant theme in his works, nevertheless, his writings spurred Wesley in his pursuit and definition of such a doctrine. Whatever else impacted Wesley, Taylor's emphasis on "intention" appears to have been the initial launching catalyst for Wesley's lifelong attention to perfection.\footnote{106, Chapter 3, 115; 112, Chapter 3, 116; 113, Chapter 3, 117 and 127, Chapter 2, 60.} It is significant that in Wesley's defining work, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection" he begins his summary definition of perfection with the phrase "it is purity of intention." Although Wesley went on to expand his definition in words that moved beyond Taylor, it is difficult to sidestep the declared fact of influence with Taylor that Wesley himself allowed. Furthermore, Wesley also heard in Taylor the language of holy living that was imbedded in his doctrine of perfection. Chapter Three, at the very least, opens the door for pneumatological and perfective influences on Wesley, coming originally from the Eastern Fathers, but mediated by the work of Jeremy Taylor.\footnote{110, Chapter 3, 116.}

Chapter Three noted that another of the Anglican Divines, John Tillotson—whose work Wesley was surely familiar with, but who receives only negative comments in Wesley—shares with Wesley a synergistic approach to justification, salvation and sanctification. Although Tillotson also shares with Wesley the perspective that obedience and holiness are semantically

\footnotetext{11}{See Footnote 94, Chapter 3, 110.}
\footnotetext{12}{See Footnote 106, Chapter 3, 115; Footnote 112, Chapter 3, 116; Footnote 113, Chapter 3, 117 and Footnote 127, Chapter 2, 60.}
\footnotetext{13}{See Footnote 110, Chapter 3, 116.}
the same, it is difficult to suggest influence versus similarity due to the paucity of Tillotson references in the writings of Wesley.

In the case of William Law, Chapter Three underscores the direct influence Law had on the developing theological mind of John Wesley prior to his Aldersgate experience in 1738. Until that point in time, Wesley's reformatted resolve, imbibed from Law, was to pursue inward and outward holiness in order to find acceptance with God. This included his passion to love God without hesitation or reserve. After Aldersgate, although with some equivocation, Wesley understood justification to be a gift of grace through faith and that his pursuit of inward and outward holiness, even perfection, was the grateful result of appropriating justification by faith. It would be appropriate to suggest that William Law directly influenced Wesley in Wesley's development of a doctrine of perfection, with the recognition that Wesley's perfection took on a post-conversion life of its own, one that Law would never have anticipated or formulated.

As Chapter Three concedes, it is apparent to this writer that a case can be made that Wesley's theological foundation was built upon selected Anglican Divines, and inasmuch as such were influenced by the doctrine of theosis of the Greek Fathers, that influence was ultimately absorbed by Wesley.

C. Chapter Four

In the first section of Chapter Four, the doctrines of pneumatology and theosis as seen in the Greek Fathers were briefly presented before examining selected Fathers' views in a more detailed fashion. Nevertheless, from this initial overview, several key agreements between Wesley and the Greek Fathers can be noted:
1). Although Wesley believed in and taught strongly individual personal salvation, both Wesley and the Greek Fathers agreed that God's salvation work is a linear process culminating in theosis, as opposed to a punctiliar moment in time.

2) Theosis or Perfection involves the participation of the Christian in the life of God through grace and renews or transforms the individual into the image and/or likeness of God.

3) Synonyms for Theosis or Perfection include words such as partaking, adoption, transformation, rebirth and regeneration. Although Wesley, for example, did not use the word "theosis" in his writing, he commonly wrote of partaking, adoption, transformation and rebirth when describing his doctrine of perfection.

4) Wesley and Greek Fathers consistently spoke of the practice of virtue through the enabling of the Holy Spirit as part of the process of perfection or theosis.

5) Some of the Greek Fathers, as did Wesley, spoke of the perfection of God's love in Christians as the ultimate practical declaration of perfection.

It should be recalled, that part of the purpose of Chapter Four was to examine Wesley's use of the selected Greek Fathers in terms of his citing of them or their works in his writing. In light of this, Chapter Four added little to the influence continuum from Clement to Wesley that had not already been noted in this chapter and in Chapter Two. Chapter Four does remind one that both men consistently agree that perfection includes above all else, a resolute and committed desire to love and follow God with all of one's being, a renewal into God's image and likeness, and a life of virtue.

14 See Footnote 33, Chapter 4, 142.
15 See Footnote 38, Chapter 4, 143.
16 See Footnote 42, Chapter 4, 144.
As noted in Chapter Four, direct influence from Athanasius, Basil of Caesarea, and even in some measure, Gregory of Nazianzus is limited and cloudy at best. From a wide angle viewpoint, one could certainly suggest influence in terms of pneumatological theology, but even having suggested that, the influence is not specific enough to warrant attachment to a particular Church Father, but rather, at the most, to the general pneumatological ethos of Greek theology. My summary comment in Chapter Four regarding the influence relationship between Gregory and Wesley remains my point of reference, but requires a more detailed study before any kind of firm conclusion can be offered.

Wesley's references to John Chrysostom, as noted in Chapter Four are primarily positive in tone, although Wesley, even as he references Chrysostom, takes a minimalist approach in terms of what he credits Chrysostom with and therefore, the capacity to declare direct influence is hindered. Although several of Wesley's direct usages of Chrysostom are pneumatological in nature, at no time are they specific enough to suggest an admitted dependence by Wesley.

At the same time, it is apparent from Chapter Four that both Wesley and Chrysostom affirmed regularly the synergistic cooperation of human will and divine grace in the pursuit of a life of holiness and virtue, \(^\text{17}\) and often in their writings default to therapeutic language in terms of soteriology and pneumatology. \(^\text{18}\)

Chapter Four allows for several Macarius-Wesley connections, \(^\text{19}\) none of which however is significant enough to declare anything other than similarity. Finally, Chapter Four

\(^\text{17}\) See Footnotes 149 and 151, Chapter 4, 174, Footnote 152, Chapter 4, 175, and Footnote 179, Chapter 4, 180.
\(^\text{18}\) See Footnotes 163-167, Chapter 4, 177-8.
\(^\text{19}\) See Footnote 212, Chapter 4, 187.
acknowledges that any direct influence connection between Ephrem and Wesley cannot be determined by Wesley's direct referencing of the works of Ephrem.

D. Chapter Five

The purpose of Chapter Five was to examine key scriptural texts that Wesley used in his exposition of the doctrine of perfection. At the same time, these selected texts would also be examined in terms of their use by the Eastern Fathers and then determine if any direct influence could be demonstrated by usage and commentary on these texts.\(^\text{20}\)

Chapter Five demonstrated, in speaking to Matthew 5:8 and 48 that the two-fold repentance of Clement corresponded directly to Wesley's declaration of justification and perfection. The first repentance aligns with justification and the beginning of sanctification, while the second repentance—not sinning—is the equivalent of Wesley's understanding of perfection. It is to that priority that both Wesley and Clement are convinced the primary purpose for the Christian life is oriented. Furthermore, Clement's articulation of perfection speaks of an unbroken or committed love as the highpoint in terms of the Christian's life of virtue or holiness. The expectation that there will be progress in righteous living, even in the pursuit of perfection, finds its expression in both men.\(^\text{21}\)

Both men emphasize the cooperation of free will and grace/faith in the journey to perfection, but that ultimately this pursuit is entered into by a relatively few who are viewed as the pure in heart.\(^\text{22}\)

\(^{20}\) In this section, I will mention only the Fathers who appear to have a clear influence on Wesley.

\(^{21}\) See Chapter 5, 240-43.

\(^{22}\) See Chapter 5, 243-4.
Both Wesley and Clement, when commenting on Matthew 22:37-39 conclude that sanctification in the Christian is anchored to the cross of Christ, which obligates the Christian to a life of obedience.

Further, Chapter Five underlines the synonymic language of "perfection, circumcision of the heart and sanctification" that both men regularly return to, along with the acknowledgement that such perfection most often occurs at the end of life.\(^{23}\)

In considering the textual commentary of Basil of Caesarea in comparison with Wesley, it is apparent that both consider the Holy Spirit as the divine power that allows humanity to pursue virtue, and that the pursuit of such leads the Christian toward perfection, which includes a perfect love for others and is seen as assisting in renewing the image of God in the Christian.

Chapter Five also emphasizes the theological commonality between Gregory of Nyssa and Wesley. As noted, both men appropriate Matthew 5:48 to support their understanding that perfection or true Christianity is the retrieval of and the imitation of the divine nature and likeness of God in humanity. Both are careful, under actions that imitate the nature of Christ, to include individual purification to the point where the Christian is cleansed of all filth and ill pleasures.\(^{24}\) Both are determined to inculcate in the mind and heart of the Christian the understanding of the assistance of the Holy Spirit in the pursuit of perfection through a life of positive virtue.\(^{25}\) Nyssa and Wesley both conclude that the capstone of perfective virtue in the

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\(^{23}\) See Chapter 5, 248-9.
\(^{24}\) See Chapter 5, 258-9.
\(^{25}\) See Chapter 5, Footnotes 25 and 26, 200, and Chapter 5, Footnotes 213 and 214, 255.
life of a Christian is "to love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your souls, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."\(^{26}\)

As noted in Chapter Five, Wesley and Chrysostom link the virtuous life and the cleansing from sin or freedom from all passions as part of the practice of perfection for the Christian. Both assert the clearest understanding of perfection is found in the texts of Matthew 22:37 and Mark 12:30.\(^{27}\) Although reflecting on different verses, Chrysostom on Matthew 5:8 and Wesley on Mark 12:30, both men are consistent in viewing the pathway to perfection as a synergistic partnership of faith and good works. Their commentary and conclusions on these respective verses are closely aligned.\(^{28}\)

The same can be said as they approach Matthew 5:8. Wesley's terminology as he describes those who are "pure in heart" shares, with Chrysostom, an emphasis on being purified from all, not some sins and filthiness. As such, both speak of being cleansed of pride, anger/wrath, and pride that allows the Christian to then live a life that demonstrates their pure love of God.\(^{29}\)

III. Final Conclusions Relating to Influence

Based on the research in this dissertation and the initial conclusions presented in this chapter, the following final conclusions can be reached:

First, there is no doubt regarding the Eastern orientation of John Wesley's theological persuasions. This is particularly seen in his pneumatology, soteriology, and anthropology. Secondly, there is clear evidence of Clement of Alexander's influence on Wesley's developed understanding of the doctrine of perfection, particularly as that doctrine is explained in terms of

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\(^{26}\) See Chapter 5, Footnote 217, 256 and Chapter 5, Footnotes 116 and 121, 229-30.

\(^{27}\) See Chapter 5, Footnote 76, 216.

\(^{28}\) See Chapter 5, Footnote 73, 216 and Chapter 5, Footnote 222, 258.

\(^{29}\) See Chapter 5, Footnote 35, 204 and Chapter 5, Footnotes 225-227, 259.
particular or specific characteristics. It is also noted, in terms of textual commentary, that Wesley imbibes the capacity for the Christian to reach a point of not sinning from the works of Clement. Further, Macarius' linkage of holiness of life and cooperating faith as a synergism between God's grace and the efforts of humanity impacted directly Wesley's understanding of the same and became a part of his nomenclature when commenting on the progressive journey of the Christian to perfection. This linear progression towards perfection is consistently established among the Greek Fathers examined in this research. Along these lines, it was noted that even Wesley's language of perfection, although avoiding the term "theosis" itself, finds expression in the Greek Fathers language of perfection with terms such as partaking, adoption, transformation and rebirth. Returning again to the individual Greek Fathers, it can be stated that Chrysostom influenced Wesley, at the very least, in terms of the use of therapeutic language, especially within the realms of soteriology and pneumatology. Further, Wesley, if not from a sourcing point of reference, certainly in terms of affinity, aligns himself closely with Chrysostom's language declaring the pathway to perfection as a synergistic partnership of faith and human works. Finally, Chrysostom's approach to Matthew 5:8 and his enumeration of the cleansing of pride, anger/wrath, and passion as signs of the purity of heart in the Christian is directly replicated in Wesley's commentary on the same verse. Gregory of Nyssa's influence on Wesley is demonstrated in their homiletical commentaries on Matthew 5:48. Both men understand perfection as the retrieval of the divine nature and likeness of God in the Christian, to the point where the individual has been cleansed of all filth and ill pleasures. Wesley's consistent use of Matthew 22:37 as the capstone of perfective virtue finds an historical precursor in the writings of Gregory of Nyssa.
It can also be demonstrated that in terms of the Anglican Divines, Jeremy Taylor's emphasis on "intention" when writing about perfection, found its way into Wesley's early foray into the subject, so that he offers "the purity of intention" as the beginning point of his definition of perfection. It is also clear that in his theologically formative years, and prior to Aldersgate, that Wesley was directly influenced by William Law in his pursuit of inward and outward holiness, which ultimately became markers in the linear progression of perfection in the life of the Christian.

In summary, the timeline of direct influence from the Greek Fathers of the fourth century to the eighteenth century Wesley appears to follow this trajectory:


IV. Final Commentary and Review

While the purpose of this thesis was thoroughly addressed, its accomplishment has clearly revealed and left more research to be done. Given the wide scope of both Wesley's writings and the writings of the selected Eastern Fathers, the same template approach of this thesis can yet be targeted for an even broader swath of research. The selected scriptural texts of Chapter Five, for example, is in no way exhaustive, leaving one to wonder if additional selected texts used by Wesley and compared to the use of the Eastern Fathers would yield more evidence of influence.

The same observation could be offered in terms of Chapter Three—the Anglican renaissance in Patristic studies. Clearly, a resurgence in interest and study of the Church Fathers occurred prior and during Wesley's lifetime. Additionally, there can be no doubt that
Wesley was cognizant of such and benefited from it. Given the limitations of this research, there yet remains a great deal of research to broaden one's understanding of Wesley's interaction, or lack thereof, with this renewed interest in the Church Fathers. It is unlikely that further study into Wesley's direct use of the Anglican Divines will produce different conclusions; however, an expanded look at the intersection of scriptural citations in Wesley and the Divines may produce further insights related to direct influence.

In terms of previous research in the subject area of this thesis, this work has moved beyond that cautionary and delimiting approach of both Heitzenrater and Bouteneff. Certainly, Kent's concern in terms of approaching the influence paradigm from Gregory of Nyssa/Macarius to Wesley was noted and in some measure affirmed in this study, but not with the negative definitiveness of Kent. McCormick's conclusion that Wesley appropriated from Chrysostom a synergistic formula that allowed faith and works to cooperate was affirmed in the broadest sense of this synergy being not only a Chrysostomian approach, but also one used by other Eastern Fathers. The direct appropriation of this approach by Wesley could not be demonstrated in this research. In contrast to Campbell's default position that identification of "primary sources" of influence on Wesley from the Eastern Fathers remains impossible, this research demonstrated that some measure of primary influence is indeed verifiable. Lee's work in linking Wesley to Macarius, rather than Gregory of Nyssa was also affirmed in some measure. That is to say, that whatever contribution Nyssa made to Macarius remains a

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30 See Chapter One, Footnotes 26 and 27, 7.
31 See Chapter One, Footnote 29, 7.
32 See Chapter One, Footnote 37, 10.
demonstrably thin line, whereas the potential influence of Macarius on Wesley appears to be far clearer.\textsuperscript{33}

Anderson's conclusion, although bilateral in its potential interpretation, allows for Wesley's dependence on the works of Clement of Alexandria for Wesley's doctrine of perfection. My research provides a clearer conclusion than Anderson does, in that I am convinced that there is very little room to suggest that Wesley did not lean heavily on Clement's work.\textsuperscript{34} Of all the Church Fathers considered, Wesley leaves no room for equivocation in his direct referencing of Clement. A conclusion that suggests otherwise appears to this writer to be pessimistically cautious and perhaps even blind to the clarity of evidence to the contrary.

In summary, my research has opened the lens in terms of Wesley's dependence on selected Eastern Fathers. In previous research, most if not all viewed the landscape of this subject through a single frame of reference—an individual Church Father. What I have done is to widen that lens so that the number of Patristic influences on Wesley has expanded.

At outlined in Chapter One, this research attempted to address specific questions.\textsuperscript{35} In some measure, each of these questions has been answered not only in this chapter, but in the preceding chapters as well. In terms of the first question, it is apparent that although the doctrines of perfection and theosis share similar emphases and distinctives, each in its own right stands independent. The language and nomenclature in Wesley's doctrine of perfection finds clear parallels in the writings of the Eastern Fathers, with a heavy emphasis on the synergy of faith and good works in the process of perfection. Further, that synergy finds

\textsuperscript{33} See Chapter One, Footnotes 41 & 42, 11-2.
\textsuperscript{34} See Chapter One, Footnote 44, 13.
\textsuperscript{35} See Chapter One, Footnote 16, 4.
expression in a life of virtue both in Wesley and the Fathers, although Wesley seems more insistent on allowing for the accomplishment of perfection in this present life as opposed to the general view of the Fathers, which restricts perfection to the next life. These similarities, to address question two, are too close to be accidental and too consistent to be an aberration, thus they outweigh an inclination to dismiss positive influence. The third question addressed goes to the heart of this research in that, given the search and research parameters, although it remains difficult, historical derivation and theological influence from theosis to perfection can indeed be demonstrated. This is affirmed not only by Wesley's own admission of such (e.g. Clement of Alexandria), but also through the scriptural and theological matrix through which the evidence was passed. That such a conclusion can be reached does not remove the potential influence of the Patristic renaissance in England during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In fact, the Patristic review assists in decoding the work of the Anglican Divines to allow the researcher to zero in on specific and particular texts and language that is found in both the Fathers and Wesley. Using the Anglican Divines as an additional filter for Wesley's doctrine of perfection assists the researcher in a focused search. In terms of this work, such a template methodology eliminated suspected Anglican influencers and clarified a secondary mediation of influence in the remaining ones. Finally, in terms of question five, it is difficult still to determine if Patristic influence actually changed the way Wesley conceived of sanctification and perfection. Without dramatic evidence of such, the best that can be said is that Wesley's theology in terms of sanctification and perfection was a moving target, a work in progress, a theology that was subject to emendation as the mature Wesley emerged in time.

Anticipating future Wesley scholarship, this thesis should provide a stronger base for additional research, in that I have offered historical plausibility related to the Eastern Fathers
influence on Wesley's doctrine of perfection. Hesitation regarding this connection can and should be abandoned in light of my research, and, because of such abandonment, scholars can confidently move deeper into the works of Wesley with a focused eye on further connections and influences. Additionally, through my research I provide an accurate assessment of those Fathers who are likely not good candidates for further "influence" research. Instead, the Eastern Fathers identified in this work as having the most likely influence on Wesley can now be examined with an even more exacting framework. The recommended framework would appear to come from an ever-widening examination of the Scriptural texts that Wesley used to underpin his doctrine of perfection in comparison with the Eastern Fathers' use of these same texts. Given that Wesley was undoubtedly a compendium of biblical texts, and given that his first line of defense for theological postures he articulated came from the Scriptures, it is critical that future scholarship not ignore this declared strength of Wesley in their analysis. To do so would be to drill in less productive soil than is necessary. Although a purely summary theological approach to Wesley's works is an appropriate and acceptable methodology for declaring his doctrinal propensities, when approached without close examination of Wesley's use of Scripture for said postures, this methodology lacks the certitude that otherwise could be obtained. Finally, future research that moves beyond this thesis can also engage the wider posture that multiple Eastern Fathers played a role in influencing Wesley's theological positions, as opposed to the tendency to conclude that whatever influence existed occurred through a singular source. This in itself will provide a certain research flexibility and may encourage further scholarship that investigates the potential influencing connections among specific Eastern Fathers. At the same time, moving beyond the pneumatology of Wesley, future
research may examine patristic influences on Wesley's ecclesiology and soteriology, using a similar research methodology as this thesis appropriated.
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